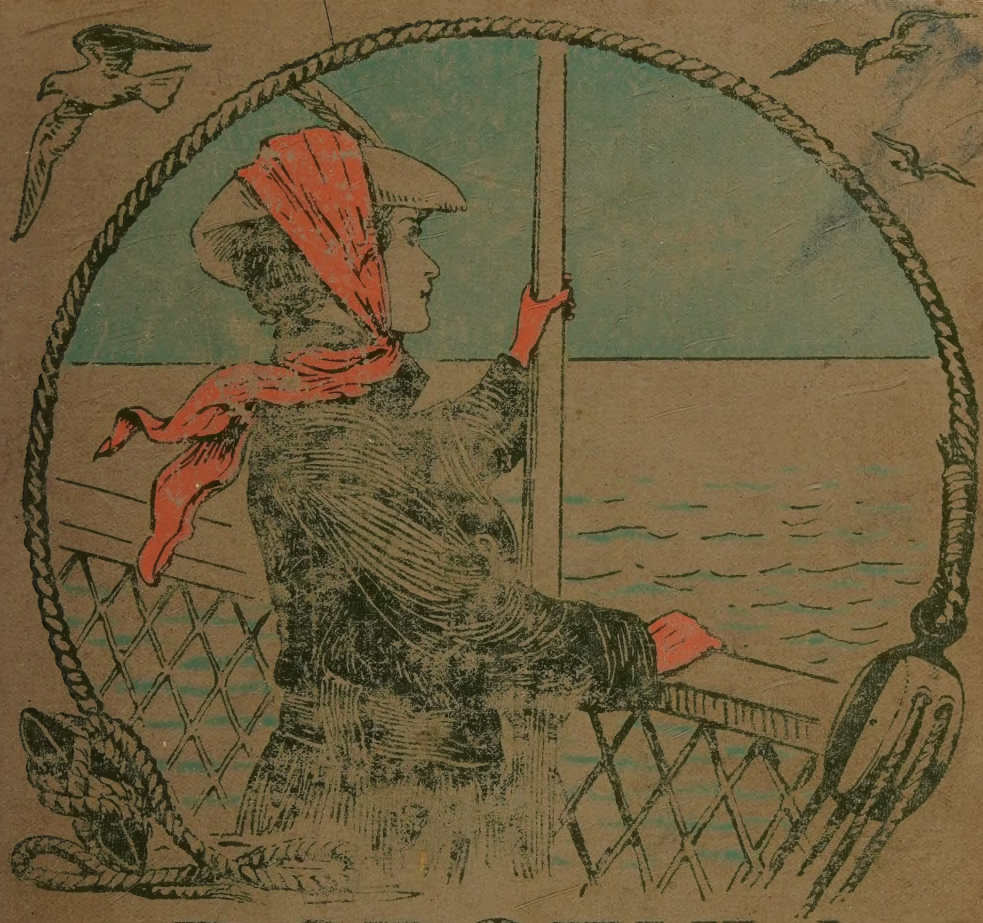

DOROTHY BROOKE ACROSS THE SEA

FRANCES CAMPBELL SPARHAWK

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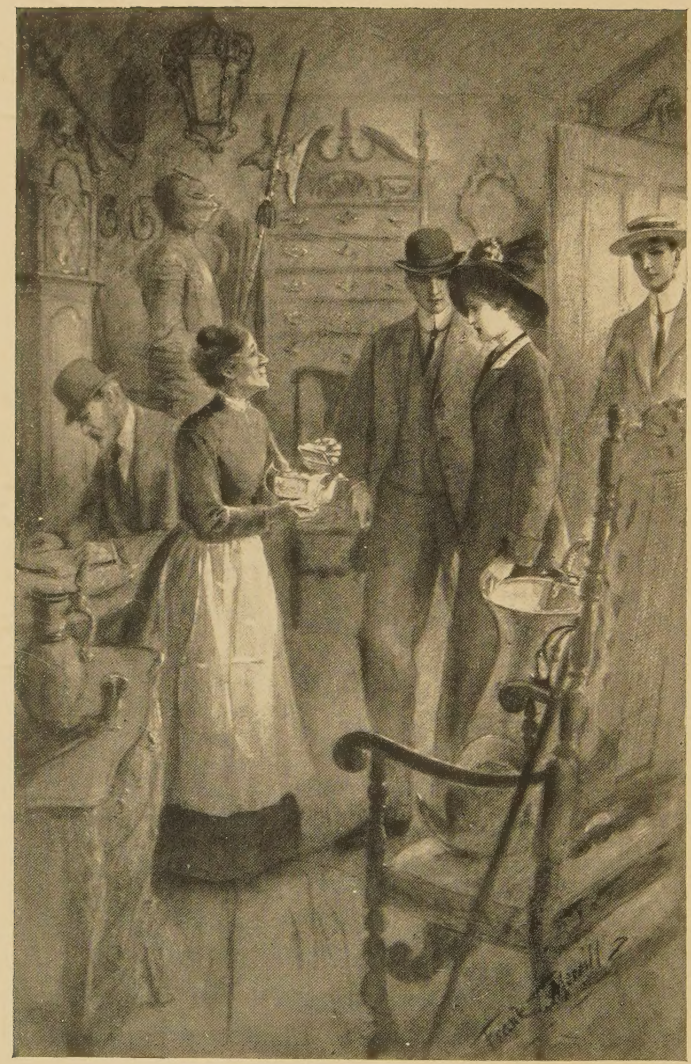

See page 92.

IN THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

DOROTHY BROOKE ACROSS THE SEA

BY

FRANCES CAMPBELL SPARHAWK

AUTHOR OF
"DOROTHY BROOKE'S SCHOOL DAYS," "DOROTHY BROOKE'S VACATION," "DOROTHY BROOKE'S EXPERIMENTS," "DOROTHY BROOKE AT RIDGEMORE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK T. MERRILL

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To My Sister

E. J. S.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	On the Sea	1
II.	Acquaintance	10
III.	Plans	20
IV.	On the Sands at Bournemouth	31
V.	A Delightful Old Gentleman	40
VI.	A Surprising Introduction	48
VII.	New Tales of Canterbury	60
VIII.	As Things Come	66
IX.	Lady Griselda	73
X.	Colonel Pell Intercedes	80
XI.	In the Old Curiosity Shop	88
XII.	Rex Tells the News	98
XIII.	A Friend to See Grace Longley	103
XIV.	A Glimpse into Dorothy's Note-Book	116
XV.	Grace Receives a Letter from Abroad	122
XVI.	Mrs. Bridges Decides to Travel	128
XVII.	Dorothy Writes Home	138
XVIII.	Harry Makes Suggestions	145
XIX.	Olive Airs Her Satisfactions	152
XX.	In a Scotch Mist	159
XXI.	One Lost; and One Found	168
XXII.	Is Miss Brooke Here?	177

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIII.	On the Rocks of Staffa	185
XXIV.	Very Fascinating	193
XXV.	Diverse Opinions	202
XXVI.	Longley Replies	214
XXVII.	A Memorable Visit	222
XXVIII.	The Girl Who Saved Her Father	230
XXIX.	Abbeys; and a Border Keep	235
XXX.	Walking on the Walls	240
XXXI.	A Rising Artist; and Some Other People	247
XXXII.	Dorothy Resigns	253
XXXIII.	One Too Many	261
XXXIV.	Old Friends Once More	268
XXXV.	Kitty Hyde's Entertainment	275
XXXVI.	Charley Bridges Makes a Discovery	286
XXXVII.	Honors to Burn	297
XXXVIII.	Mrs. Bromley is Happy	307
XXXIX.	A Guest of Distinction	314
XL.	The Call of the Drama	319
XLI.	Longley Visits Mr. Chesterdown	327
XLII.	A New Aspect of Affairs	335
XLIII.	Lord Dalkeith	341
XLIV.	A Sentence Finished	348
XLV.	Her Wedding Day	354

ILLUSTRATIONS

	OPPOSITE PAGE
In the Old Curiosity Shop . . . . *Frontispiece*	
"I'm afraid it's a little wet," she said . .	38
"She's an unusual type of beauty" . . .	46
"Your enthusiasm is delightful," he said .	140
"You're not going to fall; you're all right"	192
"Oh, your Grace," she said, "I thank you"	254
The old lady shook her finger at him warningly	312
"I give you five minutes to decide" . . .	338

Dorothy Brooke across the Sea

I

ON THE SEA

"WHAT is coming next, Pell-Mell?" said Dorothy Brooke, looking down at her companion as the two stood upon the deck as the steamer was putting off to sea. "We've not an idea," she added. "It's because nobody can tell, that we get the best fun out of things."

Then even while Priscy Pell was answering her with a laugh and gay words, Dorothy's eyes turned once more to the pier, and for a moment the smile upon her lips grew wistful, as she seemed yet to be seeing those lost to her in the distance, her dear ones, still watching the great ocean liner that was to bear her across the sea to scenes of novelty and delight. As she had said to Priscy, what was before them they could not know. But in that distance widening behind them were her father and her mother, both full of pleasure in her pleasure. Yet she knew how much they would miss her. And there were Olive and Harry, no doubt chattering of what they would do when their turn to travel came. There were also the most intimate of her college friends, and the young man to whom she had given pain by her re-

fusal of him. And nearest of all except those in her own home, were Grace and Ned Longley from whose lives fate had dashed the sweetness, and who were conquering their hardships with a courage that she admired. Not a hint of sadness had crossed their parting with her; they had not wanted even a thought of their sorrow to shadow her joy in her summer. But Dorothy would remember. In her greatest gayety was always room for an undercurrent of earnestness; as in her most earnest moments some perception of the amusing, or the ridiculous, was ready to dart into her mind. She was always ready for fun; but when occasion called, her fun was quick to give place to sympathy.

Colonel Pell watching her as he and Mrs. Pell stood behind his daughter and Dorothy, said in an undertone to his wife: "She's considering the question of being homesick. But we'll see to it that she is not." And the two looked at one another with a comprehension which had grown stronger since Priscy, Mrs. Pell's step-daughter, had become reconciled to her parents. Colonel Pell did not forget that this bridging over of the estrangement, the result of his own former indifference and hardness toward his daughter, had been due to Dorothy Brooke, Priscy's schoolmate; he felt that he owed Dorothy more than he could ever repay. But in the present arrangement by which she was to accompany them for a summer trip was also another consideration. "Those children will make it twice as pleasant for us," he added to his wife. "They'll not let us go to sleep while they're

about. We are old stagers in travel; but for them the dew of the morning will rest upon everything."

As he was speaking Dorothy turned and saw them.

"How good you were to ask me to come with you," she said to both.

"We were selfish about it. Were we not just saying so, Charlotte? We wanted to add to our own pleasure."

"And we have done it, Dorothy," said the latter. And the stately Mrs. Pell looked really genial as she smiled at the two girls.

A flicker of amusement came into Dorothy's eyes. She was remembering the play that she and Ned Longley had once collaborated, *"Taking for Granted."*

"Thank you, Mrs. Pell," she answered demurely. "I hope it's not too soon to decide. I'm going to like it all so much," she added the next moment, her eyes returning from a swift survey of the scene around her.

"I hope it's not too soon to decide," retorted Colonel Pell, smiling at her. "After a time we will go over the ship," he added, "and you shall see everything. But things have not settled into place yet."

"Nor have we, papa," said Priscy. "Don't you want to come and look over our gifts, Dorothy? They're piled up in our stateroom."

Dorothy assented, concealing her reluctance to leave the deck on which she found so much to fascinate her.

"Susie Codman does make the most delicious

fudge," commented Priscy, opening the box on the top of her pile, and passing it to Dorothy. "Do take some of mine, and when that's finished I'll help you with your box. Fudge is just the thing to sweeten our labors over these knots."

"Thank you," said Dorothy, accepting. "But the labors over the knots will not be severe," and she relentlessly cut the cords upon her own and Priscy's packages, although both carefully untied the boxes, of which there were several, that were fastened with ribbon.

"Clara has given me the very novel I wanted!" cried Priscy holding up the book. "What has she given you? And here's the daintiest little note-book from Grace. She'd not venture to give you a note-book; it would have to be as big as all outdoors to hold your voluminous thoughts."

"No sauciness, Pell-Mell! Grace has given me a fountain pen of the newest and best kind—how lovely in her. And look," she cried the next moment holding up a photograph—"Olive and Harry taken together! The children must have done that the morning they both disappeared and would not tell where they'd been, when they came back looking mysterious. What have they given you, Pell-Mell?"

"A photograph, too, not to be partial; a picture of Brookehurst. They don't mean me to forget it—as if I could!"

"Dear children!" said Dorothy.

"That sounds more superior than just three years' seniority and Ridgemore could make it," commented

Priscy. "It must be the trip to Europe that makes you put on extra airs."

"Not a doubt of it!" laughed the other.

Soon she pulled up a large box from the floor.

"Mr. Bridges said he had sent me a few flowers," she explained. "They don't look 'a few'. I wish he had not done it." She took off the wrapper and lifting the cover sat gazing in silence at a group of magnificent orchids. "Did he do it on purpose, I wonder?" she said at last, as if to herself.

"Did he do what on purpose, Dorothy?"

"He sent me orchids two years ago when I was burned at Mount Rest—when but for him and Whistler, I should have been burned to death," answered the girl softly, her eyes dreamy with the conjured vision of that day.

"I remember," said Priscy gravely. "You told me about it."

Dorothy again fell silent as she gazed at the orchids, her thought full of that summer day when she had been face to face with death. But directly she roused herself and rang for something in which to put her flowers; and after they had been placed, she and Priscy returned to opening the other gifts.

"I do wonder what this little package from Ned Longley is?" cried Priscy. "Yours is just like it, Dorothy." And she began to work at the knot of dainty ribbon that fastened the box.

But the other stopped her. "Oh, wait, Pell-Mell," she cried. "We're not to look at that to-day. Don't

you remember Ned asked us not to open them until we had been a day out?"

Priscy threw down the box, half annoyed. "What a foolish request. How I do wish," she exclaimed, "that I'd managed to get a peep at it before you reminded me, you naughty thing!" Then she laughed. "I've half a mind to do it now," she added. But Dorothy was sure she would not.

They were still discussing their gifts when there came a knock at the door. It was Colonel Pell to escort them to luncheon. He commented admiringly upon the orchids.

"Yes; they are too beautiful not to be seen," said Dorothy turning back as they were leaving the room and picking up the flowers. "Why not have them upon the table for everybody to enjoy?"

"We certainly ought, if you say so," he answered; and taking the bowl of orchids from her, he carried it into the dining-room and gave it to a waiter to be placed before Miss Brooke.

"Nobody is going to be seasick on this voyage," said Dorothy as the four seated themselves at one of the tables of the immense dining-room of the ocean liner, which was fast filling with smiling guests talking with animation, or studying the *menu* with interest. "Everybody must be here."

"Wait a bit, Dorothy," he smiled. "Shall I call you 'Dorothy'? You know we've adopted you for the trip."

"I wish you would, Colonel Pell, now and always."

"Thank you, Dorothy, now and always," he repeated. "Then, as I was saying, wait a while before you decide as to whether anybody is to be seasick. Who knows but you may try it yourself?"

"Oh, I hope not!" cried the girl.

"So do I," he answered.

"I shall try the mind cure," she said, attacking her soup with a healthy appetite.

"I've tried the mind cure a good many times—with no effect," said Mrs. Pell. "But, you see, I'm trying it again. I shall be very prudent, however. I shall take only a taste, and of the simplest things. I like to be here the first day. One gets an idea of who the people are."

"It's a good-looking crowd, mamma, isn't it?" whispered Priscy as she swept her eyes over the finely appointed tables around which sat elegantly dressed men and women, for what Colonel Pell called "the sea togs" had not yet been donned. It was a brilliant scene, and Dorothy and Priscy enjoyed it to the full.

"It's fine to be at the captain's table," confided the latter in an undertone. "You are in the midst of everything; you're sure not to be left out. And then —well, it means that you're somebody. Papa always has attention shown him; you see, he is pretty well known," she added with a proud affection that delighted Dorothy. She was accustomed to seeing her own father receive deference; but Colonel Pell was more widely known.

"Of course, everybody pays him honor; he ought

to have it," she responded warmly, first waiting to see that the subject of their comments was occupied in talking to his wife.

"That must be a bride at the end of our table, on the opposite side, Priscy," she said a little later. "She has a bridy air. Like Mrs. Knight, you remember, she's still carrying her wedding handkerchief."

"But she doesn't look like Elinor; she's not as interesting," commented Priscy.

"No, indeed! Still, I like her face. As to the bridegroom, only watch him, Pell-Mell. He is perfect devotion."

"You needn't smile, Dorothy. That's exactly what you would want your bridegroom to be."

"I shouldn't want him to look like that one," retorted Dorothy.

"How would you want him to look?" questioned Priscy mischievously. She had an idea that she knew; but she would not say so; nor was she sure.

For an instant Dorothy's gaze turned to her plate. But her eyes were full of fun when she looked up at her companion.

"Why, Pell-Mell, you know," she answered. "He's to look exactly like that young lord your father promised me if I would come. But I don't know how that is—yet."

"You will know," assured Priscy smiling back at her. "I'm perfectly certain of it."

"Yes, indeed," returned Dorothy with a laugh. "But at present he is invisible. Let us find out something about the people who are not."

A few minutes later, however, she bent close to her companion, and said softly:

"That may be he now, Pell-Mell. He looks very interesting. The only trouble is that it's you, and not me at all, he is watching so earnestly. He has not taken his eyes off you for full five minutes. Don't look this instant, he's still watching. There! Now look. He sits the next but one to the end of the table, on that side."

"I see," said Priscy.

"He's very good-looking, Pell-Mell. And he has not stared rudely, he has only been so interested. I've not seen him talking, he has been too much occupied. I'm sure that must be your title looming up. We won't have him less than a duke, of course."

The two girls looked at one another with eyes brimming over with fun.

"Now, don't get seasick, Priscy dear. He'll help to make things lively," whispered Dorothy as they rose and followed Mrs. Pell from the dining-room.

II

ACQUAINTANCE

"BEAUTIFUL weather—American weather," said the passengers accustomed to the sea, and to other weather. "So few seasick; and no wonder."

But, unhappily, Mrs. Pell was among the few. She had not been very ill, however, and was fast recovering.

"How are the girls getting on?" she asked her husband the third morning of the voyage. "Are they able to amuse themselves?"

"Are Dorothy and Priscilla able to amuse themselves?" he laughed. "I should say that they were, and the rest of us, too, if they wished. But I can see that they have a sense of responsibility while you are out of the way; they don't want to do anything you'd not approve of—'noblesse oblige'."

"That's good," she answered with an air of relief.

"Isn't it what you would expect of them, Charlotte? The fun dances in Dorothy's eyes; but her feet go demurely, though briskly, promenading up and down the deck. Priscy has me for an outlet of her fun; but I may not be enough much longer. I'm glad you'll soon be able to join us—glad for many reasons, as you know."

"Of course," assented his wife.

"And one reason is," pursued Colonel Pell, "that if I'm to defer that introduction until you're on deck to make it, that will have to be soon. Really, I can't hold my own much longer. I know I've seemed rude already."

"He is not one to whom we wish to be rude," answered Mrs. Pell with decision.

"I certainly shall be within a very short time, unless I give in, or you come to the rescue. He hangs on so that I've had to be up to all kinds of dodges to escape having all three stand face to face staring at one another and then at me. If he can actually get me into that hole, you see I shall have to introduce him. I can't exactly tell whether the girls have anything to do with the situations in which I'm always dodging rudeness by not presenting him. It looks as if one young man alone could not be so desperately clever. But, yes, he must be; for they are really as unconscious as innocence."

"Um!" commented Mrs. Pell. "It's well I'm to be at the fore again. Your skill in geological surveys and meteorological observations is greater than as a chaperon. You can read the earth and the heavens better than two girls."

"Much less difficult reading!" he laughed.

Yet Colonel Pell was more nearly right in his faith in them than his wife in her suspicions of them. They were acutely aware, it is true, of all that was going on as to the desired introduction, and they enjoyed the situation immensely. But he was right in saying that with them it was "noblesse oblige"; they would

not take advantage of Mrs. Pell's absence to trouble Colonel Pell in any way. Also, they grew interested in seeing if the young man really could carry out his purpose, and if so, how he would accomplish it?

"It's not our part to help him out," said Dorothy. "The harder he has to work for his introduction, the more he will think of us. And then, Pell-Mell, there must be some reason why your father does not want his acquaintance for us."

"Of course there is—just now," retorted Priscy. "Step-mamma wants to be in it. She can't allow introductions and things to be going on while she's down in her berth, seasick."

"I wish she'd hurry up and get well," Dorothy laughed.

"You'll find it's so," insisted the other. "Oh, she is really very kind, and I'm fond of her. But she always knows what's good for you a little better than you do yourself—and even a good deal better. I sometimes try to steer her in the direction that I want her to steer me," went on Priscy. "I told papa so one day. He said I was a naughty girl. But he laughed. Then he looked me in the eyes and said that my stepmother really loved me and always wanted what she thought was best for me, and I must remember that she was a good deal older, and perhaps a little wiser than I was. I looked back into his eyes, and told him I believed it, and I would remember. So, now we get on famously. Only, Dorothy, if you want to have a good time this summer, don't forget that step-

mamma expects you to think she knows a good deal—and she does."

"Yes, indeed, she does," assented Dorothy heartily.

Priscy paused a moment; then she added: "And, Dorothy, she will expect you to be guided by her judgment; and that will be hard for you, I know."

"My mother said that she would not be willing to have me come unless I would do that," returned the other. "She knows that being guided is not my strong point. But she said that anything less from me would be treating Mrs. Pell badly. I'm going to be a model of obedience, Pell-Mell. You'll see."

"Oh, how I shall enjoy seeing!" retorted Priscy.

Dorothy smiled, and turned the subject.

Colonel Pell was secretly somewhat annoyed at his wife's insistence upon his delaying so very simple and trifling a matter as the introduction to the two girls under his charge of an irreproachable young man who would help them to pass the hours on shipboard pleasantly. There were a good many young persons on board, to be sure, and the girls seemed at no loss for acquaintance and amusement, as he had said. But Colonel Pell liked to do a little of the managing himself. He remembered, however, that when his wife had promised to love, honor and obey him, he had had no intention of tyrannizing. He would keep his promise to her. She was to join them that afternoon; he could certainly head off the matter for one more morning. Leaving Mrs. Pell, he came upon deck.

It was a lively scene; even those in steamer chairs seemed more inclined to talk to one another than to

read their novels; and many of the passengers, and it seemed to him all the young people, were chatting or playing games, moving about the deck, or looking over the ship's side into the water, for there had been a call of a whale seen, or watching a steamer passing far in the distance and exchanging wireless messages with their own ship. The brilliant sky, the sparkling sea, the moving groups, the merry voices and laughter, the whole air of abandonment to enjoyment of ocean and sky gave the watcher a thrill of pleasure. To him it was a familiar scene; but he did not tire of it.

Soon, however, from observation of groups in general he passed to a search for the objects of his care. What could he propose to them that morning? They had been over the ship; they, especially Dorothy, had asked every possible question, it seemed to him, concerning what they had seen. They had sat or stood in all accessible places of vantage on the ship; they had promenaded the deck until even their active young bodies had been tired; in short, under his escort they had done everything that he had been able to think of doing within the walls of an ocean liner. Really, how could he amuse them that morning? With this question in his mind he turned the corner toward the other side of the ship.

And then he found his question suddenly answered. They were amusing themselves in a way that made him wonder if, after all, he should be able to keep his promise? First he caught sight of his daughter's charming profile as she stood looking up at Dorothy,

as if to learn her opinion of some question that had arisen.

"I think not, Miss Warner. We don't know him at all," the latter was saying as Priscy's father came within hearing. She was speaking to a somewhat fast-looking girl of about her own age who, evidently, had just proposed a game of shuffleboard and was, it seemed to him, in want of another player to join them.

The girl tossed her head in answer to Dorothy's objection. "You don't have to be introduced to play shuffleboard," she retorted. "How absurd!" And with the words she turned toward a fourth person who was standing at a little distance watching the three girls intently, and clearly only withheld from joining them by fear of unwelcome intrusion. As the speaker turned, he met her look with a flash of eagerness in his eyes, took a step forward, and halted only for the invitation he believed on her lips. It was the young stranger who had made acquaintance with Colonel Pell and had been seeking his opportunity to do so with his daughter and Miss Brooke. Should Colonel Pell break his word to his wife, as, if he turned away, he would do in spirit? Or should he save the day by a deed he hated?

He came forward apparently unconscious of the young man he was hurrying past.

"I'm glad to hear you say that," he began with a courtly bow to the young lady who had answered Dorothy. "For then perhaps you'll allow me a hand on your side of the game, even if I have not the pleas-

ure of your acquaintance? Or if you prefer, my daughter will tell you who I am."

Dorothy's face flushed and she bit her lip for a moment. Priscy looked annoyed and amused. Then she presented her father as he stood ready for the game, and still apparently unconscious of the young man behind him whom he had ousted. His action had seemed so unpremeditated that the latter after a moment's hesitation as to whether he should boldly request the desired introductions, and the decision that the time was not auspicious, turned away disappointed, but unenlightened.

"That wasn't fair in you, papa," whispered Priscy during the game.

"Am I not playing fair?" he questioned returning her look with an innocence that in an instant changed to amusement. "All things come to him who waits," he then quoted softly to her, and gave his disk a successful shove.

That afternoon he sought out his daughter and Dorothy as they sat talking with this same young lady, and apologizing to her that Mrs. Pell had sent for them, took them away with him.

There sat the lady in her steamer chair, her wraps about her, her eyes smiling at them as they drew near. Some one was sitting beside her.

"There's the 'all things come to him who waits,' is it, papa?" whispered Priscy saucily.

But there was no time to answer. "I knew you would want to welcome me back to the world again," Mrs. Pell greeted them. "Do sit down and talk to

me awhile. What have you been doing with yourselves all this time? I hope it hasn't seemed so long to you as it has to me."

"It has seemed long to us when we thought of you," returned Dorothy. "We knew you were not very ill; but we wanted you well."

Her listener nodded approvingly. "Thank you, Dorothy," she said and glanced at Priscy who was smiling assent. Then after a few moments' desultory talk, she turned to the person sitting silent on her left, but who at her glance rose with alacrity. He was quite young, slightly above medium height, with dark blue eyes and dark brown hair, his features handsome, but not too regular for strength, his naturally fair complexion tanned by abundance of air and sunshine, his bearing dignified and graceful. He could never be awkward, or boorish, thought Priscy as she looked at him.

"Lord Hervey, Miss Brooke," said Mrs. Pell; "Lord Hervey, my daughter, Miss Pell."

Dorothy even as she rose to return his bow found opportunity to give Priscy a single swift glance. "Here's milord, according to promise, Pell-Mell," it said, and said with a fun that Priscy did not dare to meet; but although she turned away from it instantly, it left her face twitching with a mirth that she managed with difficulty to compose into a smile of welcome to the stranger. She admired Dorothy's dignity and envied her her gravity. Really, it was not fair in her to set other people nearly into convulsions of laughter, and yet keep so solemn herself.

"Wouldn't you like to walk a little?" asked Lord Hervey addressing both girls after he had stood talking a few minutes with them and Mrs. Pell. "The waves are making a great showing against the bows in this wind."

"Oh, yes, go if you like," smiled Mrs. Pell. "I'm in a very interesting place in my novel." And she picked up her book as the three moved away. But as for an hour they passed and repassed her at intervals, now promenading and now in search of seats in the pleasantest spot they could find, she turned more pages in the book of her day-dreams than in the one she was holding in her hand. At last she spoke to her husband who was stretched on the chair beside hers, and was also dividing his time between his note-book and the young trio.

"Which one is it, Randolph?" she asked him.

He watched for a minute, and then answered laughing into her eyes: "The beam was never held more level, Charlotte. It's a perfect balance."

"Yes—to-day," she returned. "But——"

"There's one thing," he said interrupting her; "you and I will chaperon two of the best-looking girls in England this summer. Nobody here compares with them in beauty, or carriage."

"Lord Hervey sees that," she answered still watching the three.

"Take care, Charlotte," he warned. "Castles in Spain."

"Yes, I know," she said. "A mere summer day-dream."

" As for me," he returned, " I'm in no haste to lose Priscilla; we have just found her. And remember, young things may have many and many a talk and laugh without putting their elders about over it."

It was that evening, when Priscy and her father stood alone together in the moonlight, that she said to him merrily:

" You see, papa, you'll have to find two lords for us. We can't divide one and go to buffets."

" Oh, no, Priscilla, not I! I only promised you one. You'll have to pick up the other yourselves," he retorted in the same tone.

III

PLANS

"How do you like him, Dorothy?" inquired Priscy in the privacy of their stateroom.

"Very much indeed, Pell-Mell. I think he's rale sensible, if he is a lord." And she looked at her companion, grave as an oyster.

"Oh, I don't care how much you do that sort of thing here," cried Priscy. "But this afternoon you almost made me laugh when you looked at me just that instant, and then you were as proper and dignified as a princess, while I came near snickering. Mamma would never have forgiven me, and I shouldn't have blamed her."

"I knew you wouldn't do it though. And you wouldn't have wanted to snicker if the thing had come about easily and naturally, not as if the stage were set for it. Of course, we could have brought your father to it at first—what is it, anyway? But of course, we wouldn't. I don't care in the least," she added; "only, I don't like to be managed. Now you can judge what a model of obedience, just as I told you, I'm going to be this summer."

"What do you think of his looks?" asked Priscy.

"I think he looks like a lord."

"I wish you wouldn't jest all the time, Dorothy."

"I'm in dead earnest; I do think so. And I think he talked well."

"You made him do it; you asked him things when you found he had been to the United States and Canada."

"But you were interested, too, Pell-Mell."

"Oh, very much," said Priscy. "But I should never have thought of asking about them. And you wouldn't know from his manner—I mean from his not showing off about things—that he'd ever been away from home."

"I should," laughed the other, "as he was on shipboard. Since he is coming home, he must have been away. And since he started from the United States, he must have been in them. So, you see, I didn't pry."

"You pry, Dorothy! That's absurd. But you knew how to make him talk, as I said, and be interesting. I should have envied you your skill, if I had not enjoyed it so much."

"You rate me too high, Pell-Mell dear." And after a moment Dorothy added reflectively: "I wonder if I like to get at people and read them, because I'm always after copy? Sometimes I don't know it's that; and then again, I know at the time that it is."

"Did you know this afternoon?"

Dorothy shook her head. "No, I was really interested in him. And I suppose I was flabbergasted at talking to a lord, especially when I remembered your father's promise." Priscy joined in her merriment. "But, really now," the other went on, "should you

like to live in a country where in winter you have only four hours' daylight? What if you do make it up in summer, you can't use it all. That's the great Northwest."

"He had a wonderful adventure in that country, Dorothy; and, I suspect, more than one."

"Indeed, he must have had. And we managed by dragging things out of him and piecing a good many things together, to discover that he had been quite a hero. He did not mean to have that come out, though; he was dreadfully embarrassed. Some of these people we take it for granted, have been pampered into uselessness, have stern stuff in them, and stand hardships better than those brought up next door to these. Yes, I think Lord Hervey is a good fellow."

For a moment Priscy said nothing. Then she asked, "Shouldn't you like to meet his sister?"

"He said we should in London," answered the other.

Priscy laughed a little. "Yes, he did," she said. "But you don't think he is going to remember us after he gets home to his own people again, do you?"

Dorothy looked at her an instant in silence. She did not agree with Priscy. "That's not very complimentary either to you, or to him," she retorted.

"Do you believe we shall find letters from the girls when we land?" asked Priscy. "Susie declared when she bade us good-by that she had posted a long one five days before. Was she joking, do you think?"

"Give me until we land to tell you," said Dorothy. And Lord Hervey was discussed no further that night.

But while Dorothy was writing the day's instalment of her long letter home, Priscy lay awake going over the conversation of that afternoon, and wondering what was the whole story of that adventure in the Northwest of which both girls were sure that they had heard only a part? Both believed that he had done something brave of which he refused to boast.

"I've enjoyed every moment of the trip thus far," ran Dorothy's rapid pen. "Yet I've not enjoyed everything I've seen. It's all right that the second-class passengers should not have elegant staterooms and table luxuries; they do have good food. But it seems too bad that because they've not money they cannot have as much of the deck and as good a part of it as we do, for this means air and sunshine and exercise. But it may be all right; they are certainly comfortable; we went over that part of the vessel. Colonel Pell didn't want us to go into the steerage; but I begged so hard that he permitted us a peep."

She gave an account of the introduction to Lord Hervey, his travels in her own land, and what Priscy and she believed of him. "His comments upon what he had seen were very clever," she wrote. "But he listened with as much attention to what Pell-Mell and I had to say about things as if we knew everything, and he nothing. Our college life interested him; he has known Americans at Oxford. When we questioned him about England he told us a great deal, and then he reminded us that we would see it for ourselves. 'Yes, I know,' Priscy retorted.

'But we want to see if you get it right, Lord Hervey.' People say Englishmen are slow to take a joke; but he took hers instantly, and while he was laughing with us he was watching Priscy's charming face. She is always charming; but when she sparkles and dimples, she is irresistible. Lord Hervey says we shall meet his sister, Lady Griselda, in London. Priscy doubts it. If we do, I hope I shall not forget and call her 'Miss Hervey'!"

Whatever might be Lord Hervey's intention of continuing the acquaintance in England, he was far from permitting his new friends to forget him during the voyage. He told himself that he had never seen two girls more desirous of having a good time, or more successful in obtaining it, but always like ladies, as they were. They were very amusing, and they became more interesting to him every day. The beauty of both grew upon him rather than lessened, as he had often found to be the case with other girls. It was, he recognized, not only beauty of form and feature, but also of intellect and character. Which girl did he prefer? He believed that he already knew. It was of no real consequence at present; but it occurred to him that sometime it might be.

It was the last night out, and quite late. Priscy was in her stateroom; Dorothy had lingered on deck. She was alone. From where she stood at the side of the steamer the outlook was gloomy. The shadow of the ship fell upon the water before her and stretched far out into the world of waters in the midst of which

she seemed as in a great shallow bowl sloping upward toward the horizon. But her eyes were not lifted to this. In the dark and threatening water they pictured in its gloom all the sadness that her short and happy life had known; and also the sadness of those dear to her, of Grace Longley now companion to a woman the very thought of whom as ruling her friend made Dorothy shrink; of Ned Longley's young years shut out from the demands of youth and devoted to a service noble and beautiful, it was true, that of a mother worthy his best devotion. Ned had great talent, perhaps genius; but literary work took a great deal of time to bring fame or money. All that he and Grace could earn for years to come must be for their mother; she was even now so far from recovery from the fearful accident that had killed her husband, so delicate, that without constant attendance and many luxuries she could not live at all. Dorothy loved her friends the better for their devotion and the conviction that nothing else was possible to them.

But if this had not come!

There were times when there still sounded in the girl's ears the sudden words of love that had broken from Ned as for the moment the two had stood alone together in the midst of the crowd. Then the voice of the crowd had surged between. "To-morrow!" he had whispered as he left her. And that morrow—the evening in the theatre, the death and disaster that had surged between them and still maintained its barrier!

Ned would always be her friend; she understood

him. Was she content? She could not always be sure. She could not read clearly. She hoped so.

She turned away, and passed through the great doors to the other side of the ship. On this side was the stateroom which she shared with Priscy. On her way to it she waited and stood by the rail, and looked forth into the night over the ocean. But as she gazed, she held her breath in amazement and her eyes widened with pleasure and her lips parted in a smile.

For the scene was like a different world from the one that she had just quitted. Here the moon not yet high, flooded the sea with its radiance and the waves seemed to ripple rather than dash against the ship's side. These few steps had brought her into a new atmosphere; she had passed from darkness to light, from gloom to joy. Once more she stood resting her hand upon the rail and looking out upon the water, her face now lighted with the thoughts that had been surprised into brightness. What a delightful day she had had, and how full of interest would the morrow be with its landing in a new country where the presence of her friends would keep her from loneliness in the midst of strangeness. And in this land the weeks, the months would be crowded with enjoyment. The golden moon was none too bright for her prospects. But through everything would she remember her tiny American flag of the finest silk, its staff a gold pin with a turquoise in its head, its blue eye speaking of fidelity, she understood. Priscy's flag had been exactly the same, except that the head of her pin was a gold star. By this gift Ned had said to her, " In

whatever you may find abroad that interests and charms, keep sacred your love for your own land." Had Priscy read hers in the same way, she wondered? Neither had spoken of this when, the second day out, they had opened the little boxes.

In this new land not only would she see places, but people also of interest. It was only that day Lord Hervey had assured Priscy and herself that they would meet in England; and Dorothy had seen his gaze linger on her companion. "Pell-Mell fascinates him," she had said to herself. And she did not wonder. She smiled as she suddenly recalled when and how she had first seen and heard Pell-Mell.

As she still stood looking out to sea, a sound upon the deck nearer than the other noises made her turn her head. A figure in the distance had disengaged itself from the group at the bows and was coming in her direction. But whoever it was might not have seen her. But, yes, for he was coming toward her.

Suddenly, she became conscious how lonely it was out there. She had not noticed it in her thoughts and the enjoyment of moonlit sea and sky. She took her hand from the rail and grasped the coat which the breeze had flung backward. Then with head held high and eyes still upon the sea, she drew toward the figure which at the sight quickened its steps. But when still at a little distance, Dorothy stopped at a stateroom door, and the next moment had slipped the key in her hand into the lock.

The young man approaching perceived that he had been mistaken; she had not been coming to meet him

for so much as a word in the moonlight, she had been merely coming to her room. An instant he halted; then he came on again to Dorothy standing with her door ajar and her face turned toward him. As he reached her, he bowed.

"What a superb night, Miss Brooke."

"Wonderful, Lord Hervey. I have been watching the moonlight. I see you are equally well employed; it's worth watching. Good-night."

"Of course, she's right," muttered the young man as Dorothy disappeared. "But she looked so lovely standing there, I did want a word with her. Yet I ought not to have tried it."

When both had vanished, a third figure of which neither had been aware strolled forward from its post of observation toward the stern.

"She needs no watching," said Colonel Pell to himself as he stood a moment looking at the moonlight as Dorothy had been doing. "Her instincts are absolutely true. And he is a gentleman. Yet she was so beautiful standing there, I can't wonder he wanted to speak to her. But now that the children have turned in, I'll do the same. The sea air makes me sleepy." At the door of his stateroom, however, he paused, and his face softened with a tender memory. "And Priscilla would have done the same," he said to himself with decision. "Her poor mother for all her sad failings was a beautiful and modest girl. I might have helped her, had I been kinder—ah me, when do we not come to be sorry for our harshnesses? And

her daughter is coming to have a good deal of the mother's beauty, together with the air and bearing and somewhat of the character of the Pells—a rare combination."

The steamer was in. There were farewells to the acquaintances of less than a week; promises to meet again, a few of these promises to come true.

Dorothy and Priscy found everything around them interesting. They would have been glad to see more of Liverpool with its busy streets and new sights. Yet they realized that London would be so much larger and more fascinating; to go there did not require much resignation. And there Colonel Pell must go first of all, for his next movements must depend upon the letters and telegraphic orders that he would find awaiting him there. In the station at Liverpool Lord Hervey who was going in another direction parted from his new friends.

"Remember, this is not good-by," he repeated in an undertone to Dorothy and Priscy. And his eyes passed from one bewitching face to the other, as he turned away for his departing train.

After dinner in Mrs. Pell's private sitting-room in a Londoon hotel, Colonel Pell regretfully announced his news. He must immediately devote several days to the Government business which had brought him across. But he desired to be with the others in what London sight-seeing they could do. Would they like to go to some seaside resort and rest, and wait for him there?

"That will do admirably," returned Mrs. Pell. "I've no idea of going about London without you. We'll run down to Bournemouth. I love the place; and I have not been there for years."

IV

ON THE SANDS AT BOURNEMOUTH

"How small the trains look with the little coaches," remarked Dorothy to her companion the next day as the two followed Colonel and Mrs. Pell into the Waterloo Station. "And look at the engines, they're so small," she said. "No wonder they don't snort like our monster locomotives, but go 'chew! chew! chew!' as if they were not grown-up."

"I noticed it at Liverpool," said Priscy.

"But you must confess they go very well," declared her father looking back with a smile at the two girls.

"Indeed, they do," assented both.

The next moment Dorothy darted away, and Mrs. Pell watched her with surprise as the girl came back from the ticket window.

"Colonel Pell has bought tickets for us all," she said.

"Oh, I know that, Mrs. Pell. I only went to get a time-table—and view the country o'er," she added.

Priscy's father looked at Dorothy, and said quizzically yet with a touch of earnestness in his tone:

"You are not going to be one of the travelers who find everything wrong that is not in accord with the

customs of their own country, are you, Dorothy? In that way you'll get neither wisdom, nor fun."

"Not I, Colonel Pell," cried the girl, the latter already shining in her eyes. "I went to get a time-table; and I'm studying the cleverness and canniness of the English in contrast with our own lavish ways. There's not a railroad station in the United States so small that it will not bestow a time-table upon you for the asking. But no such extravagance here! You buy your time-table—that gives you practice in reckoning English money," she added.

The reproof in Mrs. Pell's eyes vanished, and her husband walked on laughing.

"I've seen your luggage aboard," he said to her as he stood talking to them all at the window of their coach, "and with a good tip to the porter at Bournemouth, I think you will come out all right; I hope so. I hate to let you go alone," he added regretfully.

"Why, papa, alone with three of us!" cried Priscy, the affection in her eyes as she turned them upon the dignified, soldierly man before her, atoning for the saucy lilt in her tones.

"Yes, three of you to be sure," he returned. "And a very efficient three. I ought to be content. But then I wish I were going too—as a supernumerary."

"Is that your accustomed rôle, Colonel Pell?" And Dorothy's smile broadened as her hearers laughed.

"When shall you be able to join us?" Mrs. Pell asked her husband.

"I can't tell that to-day; I must wait for further

cablegrams," he answered her. "But be sure I shall come at the earliest moment possible. Meantime have all the fun you can."

"Is that meant for a threat?" questioned Dorothy, making him laugh as the train pulled out of the station.

When Dorothy opened her eyes the following morning, it seemed to her at first that she must be in her own country. For were English skies ever as blue as this one? After winking herself awake, she sprang up and ran to the window for assurance that she was really in Bournemouth.

There sparkling in the morning light lay the water, with the sunlight pouring over the East Cliffs flooding its expanse to the horizon line. As she sat looking, she cared nothing that she beheld the curving shores of a great bay which led out into the English Channel and was not called by the name of the only ocean she had known by sight. It was all the same, she told herself; for it all opened out into the vast Atlantic which washed the shores of the land in which was her own dear home. What were they all doing there at that moment? She smiled, remembering that at that moment it was still night in America, and they ought all to be asleep, whether at Brookehurst, or elsewhere. Colonel Pell had sent a cablegram from Liverpool, and some post that day would bring to Bournemouth the letters from home that would be promptly forwarded.

Oh, no, Dorothy was not homesick in the least; but

she would be so glad of letters. Her mother would be sure to write. And there would be a note from her father with the check he would send, lest his daughter should be in need of some reasonable thing—or even extravagant one—which she could not get without this. She must not in any such way be dependent upon her friends. Then there would be Harry's questions and Olive's comments and suggestions; and love from everybody. This latter seemed very precious to the girl sitting by the window and sending voiceless messages to her dear ones. Why could not a soul message travel as far as a wireless one, she asked herself, believing that when those at home waked and thought of her, as they would do, they would know she had sent them a morning greeting.

With her eyes sweeping the ocean horizon, she began to wonder if it were possible to catch a glimpse of the Isle of Wight, to her a land of beauty and desire? For much as she might want letters from home and all her friends, there were things to be seen and enjoyed before the post came in. She gazed on intently. Was she looking in the wrong direction? Or was the charmed island really too far away?

At last her glance turned to the sunlit tops of the tall pines on the Eastern Cliffs, and the beauty of the landscape then before her began to hold her. Those jagged lines of shadow beyond her must dip into one of those rocky ravines called chines which abound on that part of the coast. The sun was bright on the tops of the houses which were hidden in abundant shrub-

bery, and slanted in long lines along the roads the openings of which she could see from her window. Over these played the shadows of the bordering trees. Wherever her eyes turned they gazed upon beauty. And it was so quiet. Nobody seemed to be awake yet. This was a fine place in which to rest, she told herself; here nobody was in a rush. The great pier which the guide-book had told her was nearly a thousand feet long and very wide might be very convenient and very pleasant; but it added nothing to the beauty of the landscape; to her the glowing sea and the rare touches of country wildness made its charm.

She began to look at the long line of the beach, its sands narrow from the grass and shrubs growing near the water's edge. The more she looked at it, the better she liked this line of beach. She had arrived in the late afternoon of the previous day. Mrs. Pell had wished both girls with her at that hour and in a new place. Then had come dinner, and in the evening they had done nothing.

And Mrs. Pell might want them with her that morning. She would never care to walk along this beach which Dorothy began to feel her feet quivering with eagerness to tread. Then, too, the girl would have to ask permission, and if this were not granted, to yield gracefully, to do what was arranged for her to do. But now Mrs. Pell would not remonstrate, or restrain; to all appearance she was fast asleep several doors away. Pell-Mell was in the room next her own; but Pell-Mell dearly loved her morning nap. And then, at the moment Dorothy did not want even her.

She wanted to be all alone on this first exploring expedition, to have the beach to herself; for now not a person was in sight. If she should go now, she could go as far as she pleased and in whatever direction the fancy might take her, and so make acquaintance with the place and send her thoughts across the sea with no interruptions; yes, if she went now, she could follow her own sweet will—and Dorothy loved her own sweet will.

She began to dress in haste.

Down stairs she found only housemaids and men servants to interview her, had they been so disposed. She sped to the shore, and there she rejected the paved elegance of the pier, as she had done from her window, and sped along with delight on the smooth, hard sand of the beach. How soft and beautiful the air was; and the sun still shone, the much-heralded clouds darkening an English landscape had not yet appeared. Whatever might come later, she had the best of the day, and thus far she had it all to herself.

She had started at the pier and walked quite a distance in one direction, looking at the houses, the roads, the gardens of which she could catch glimpses, but not deserting her route for them. Then returning to the pier, she again passed beyond it in the opposite direction. She would learn at least a little of what was to be seen from this part of the shore. How much better she felt for her exercise. Then with the inspiration of earth and sky and sea, several ideas had come to her for the new story for Mr. Harris which she was to write some day. Also she was busy in

studying how she should put most clearly to Ned Longley a fine suggestion which had just come into her head in regard to the new play that they were working upon.

But after she had walked for perhaps a quarter of an hour, her fleet steps unconsciously striving to keep pace with her vigorous thoughts brought her into sight of a man walking moderately some distance in advance of her. From his gait and figure Dorothy thought him elderly, although he carried himself with the erectness of youth. As she drew nearer, she checked her pace to correspond with his. She remembered that the beach at this part was deserted but for them; and she would not appear to attract his attention by passing him even at a swift pace. So, she kept behind him telling herself that she hated to poke and that she abhorred stepping upon anybody's heels, although she was far from doing this, being still at quite a distance; yet she had the impression of doing it from her being obliged to watch his pace to regulate her own.

A breeze had sprung up. It was blowing against him and made him, and consequently, Dorothy, walk even more slowly. The obstacle and the pace had put all her brilliant ideas to flight; and she was about to turn back and repeat her old walk, saying to herself that the same scene over again was preferable to an old gentleman's heels, when a sudden puff of wind blew off his hat.

As he turned to catch it, it rolled, and before he could reach it, the wind gave it another puff. The

sand was so hard that it rather helped than hindered its progress toward the waves which seemed to struggle up to the beach to seize it, as the hat on its part evidently had its mind made up for a sail as it twisted and turned and rolled toward them. By this time the old gentleman was fairly running after it, but the hat went still faster than he did. Dorothy watched with amusement. He would catch it? No, not yet. The next time? No, not even then. Once more he tried; but in vain, the hat was still rolling and skimming along, always nearer the sea, and was certain to elude its owner.

Then Dorothy's swift feet entered into the race, and Dorothy's trained young body stooped at the crucial moment, and her agile fingers seized the hat just as the topmost wave had touched it. The hat held forth in her hand, she went toward the old gentleman, her smile restrained lest he should read her amusement at his vain efforts.

"I'm afraid it's a little wet," she said regretfullly. "I wasn't quite quick enough."

He stood looking at her before he put out his hand for his hat, studying her tall, supple figure, her erect carriage, her grace of movement, the power and sweetness and beauty of her face, the exquisite courtesy of her words which put her youth and deftness side by side with his age and slowness, since he also had not been quite quick enough. But in his look was not a touch of rudeness, only the open admiration which age might show to youth.

And as Dorothy looked up at him, for tall as she

"I'M AFRAID IT'S A LITTLE WET," SHE SAID.

was, he was still taller, what first she read in his face even before its forcefulness was that he was a gentleman. As he reached out and took the hat from her, his eyes smiling, courteous, with respect in their admiration looked into hers.

"I thank you—" for an instant he hesitated; "mademoiselle" did not suit her— "Una," he said.

She flushed with pleasure. "For a moment I was afraid the sea had it," she answered smiling as she returned his bow which a courtier might have envied, and was turning away.

But he kept her. "Are we not going in the same direction?" he asked. "Will you permit me to walk beside you? I see already that we have some points of agreement; we both like the beach when it is quiet, and we both like to set off on our own hook and not be bothered with attendance."

Dorothy laughed. He had read her well at a glance. And why should he not walk beside her for the little distance further that she was going?

"I may be able to point out some of the places not familiar to you that we pass, and to tell you of others," he added perceiving her hesitation.

"Thank you, Prince Arthur," she answered him smiling. "I am sure you will."

At the name his face lighted. Then, his classic allusion had not been lost, as he guessed. He had been convinced that her brains were as active as her feet, and as well trained.

"Are you not going this way?" he asked, and turned in the direction in which she was facing.

V

A DELIGHTFUL OLD GENTLEMAN

"I THINK," said Dorothy as the two were speaking of the famous Corfe Castle about a score of miles from Bournemouth, "that on the whole I am more interested in ruins than in anything else I shall see here—I'm not including the people—I mean in all the beauties and the wonders."

"Why do you think that?" asked the old gentleman.

"As you know, we have no ruins in our own country, except the ruins of some of the buildings we put up so badly that they fall down before they're finished; and we are never proud of those." He laughed. "But don't imagine that is of usual occurrence, any more than actual ruins are here," she hastened to say, not to give a bad impression of her own country. "But ruins have a human interest. One looks at them, and sees things that have been."

"Oh, I understand. And when you look at Corfe Castle which you know is considered one of the finest ruins in England, you expect to see the wicked Queen Elfrida giving the stirrup cup to her step-son, Edward the Martyr, and while he is drinking it stabbing him in the back to make way for her own son on the throne, and to see the dying king dragged by his horse

through the forest to the very gate of the castle? Or you will picture the cruelty of King John to the captives in their horrible dungeons when this castle was a State Prison? Or the murder of Edward II which took place here? Or the treacherous capture of the place when Lady Bankes was so valiantly defending it against Cromwell? And but for Cromwell who when it had fallen into his hands ordered it to be partially destroyed, you would see it in a somewhat better condition, in spite of its having been built in the tenth century. But all these are far from pleasant memories for a young girl."

"Yes; or for anybody," assented Dorothy. "But how can we help seeing the truth when it is before our faces? Yet there is one comfort in recalling these tragedies of so long ago—the wretched sufferers would have been dead anyway long before this time."

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed. "You are a real philosopher. That's a consolation that had never occurred to me."

"I dare say it is a false one," returned the girl.

"On the contrary, I think it's sound doctrine. To everything, as to every person, comes a to-morrow, and the to-morrow often ends it. It is wise to think this of suffering. I was only enjoying the wit and wisdom of your point of view," he added, fearing that his mirth had embarrassed her. "And then—did I tell you?—the castle is haunted. That interests you no doubt?"

"Indeed, it does," she answered him. "Are there many ghosts?"

"I see you're incorrigible," he laughed. But he told her several legends of the place.

It was nearly an hour before he parted with her at the door of her hotel, quitting her with his courtly bow and his thanks for the pleasure she had given him.

"The thanks are due on my side for all that you have told me about Bournemouth," said Dorothy.

"And how about the hat?" he queried, as again lifting it, he turned away with a laugh.

When Dorothy re-entered neither Mrs. Pell nor Priscy had appeared. She said nothing to them of her walk, only smiled mysteriously when the latter declared Dorothy looked as if she had been awake for hours and enjoying life.

"So I have, Pell-Mell," she answered.

"I dare say you've written a story, or done some planning by letter with Ned over one of the plays you two are always at," volunteered the other.

"Tra—la—la," sang Dorothy softly, and smiled again. "I'll tell you some day," she said.

There was no reason why she should not, and she hated mysteries, except in plots for stories and plays.

"Well! If you're not ready, you'll not speak, and wild horses can't drag it out of you," returned the other.

"I'm so glad you're not going to try them, Priscy dear."

"Only, it's 'petie selfish' in you, as the little fellow said of something else, not to give me your recipe for looking so blooming and so pleased and as if your head were full of something dreadfully amusing."

Dorothy laughed out. "It is," she confessed.

But the diary letter to her mother contained a full account of this incident which had so pleased and amused her.

"He made me think of some of papa's most interesting friends, only that he was older," she wrote of the old gentleman whose hat she had recovered for him. "He must be a generation further back—but not in manners, or information. He told me of Bournemouth and the places around it as if he had been born and always lived here. But he certainly has not lived here all his life, for from chance references he must have been a good deal of a traveler, although I don't think he has been to the United States. But I did not like to ask him, because he was so careful not to ask me a single question as if he were trying to find out who I was, or anything about me. Nor do I have an idea who he is; only he seems to me one who may be lonely, and so I am the more ready to talk to him. But 'Una' and 'Prince Arthur' were enough for us; we were only interested in each other's opinions and likes as to people and things. I should enjoy talking with him again, but I never shall. When I take my walk to-morrow morning I shall not choose the beach, but shall go in another direction where he will not be.

"To-day Priscy and I drove with Mrs. Pell to Christ Church, five miles from Bournemouth. It's a quaint old town full of attractive nooks and corners; it has a lane the people call 'Darruts', a corruption of

'Dane's route', for the records of the place go back to early in the tenth century. The castle there dates back to Edward I; its ruins are very interesting. The Priory Church is referred to in the Domesday book. In the Western tower we saw the fine monument to Shelley. It represents the body of the poet washed ashore, and his wife clasping it in her arms.

"Some day we are going to see parts of the New Forest, and the Rufus Stone. Mrs. Pell laughs at us for imagining that anybody knows the spot where Rufus was killed by the arrow. But Priscy says her interest in it is because Rufus had red hair like hers—not much like her beautiful color, a real Titian. We are going to so many places. I will tell you about them when I've seen them."

In the instalment of her home letter a few days later Dorothy wrote:

"The second morning I started a little earlier for my walk. As I told you, I resolved not to go to the beach, and thought that I should get home again before my old gentleman would have started. But the first person I met as I came out from the hotel and turned the corner, indeed, the only one for a time was he. I know I looked surprised, for I was. He made me one of his dignified bows as he bade me good morning; and said that he had enjoyed our walk the day before so much, he had come to see if I would permit him to accompany me this morning also. He saw me hesitate decidedly. I was going to say 'no'. For I knew Mrs. Pell wouldn't like it, and was not

sure that you would, though she is so much more conventional than you. But he went on to tell me that although he had said he liked to be on his own hook, that did not mean he liked to go alone; there was a difference between attendance and companionship. Then he added with great respect and in appeal to my sympathy, that he was expecting his grandson in a few days, but should be quite lonely until he came. But this would not have induced me to let him come, only that from the first moment I had looked at him, I had trusted him. And so, when that morning he looked at me and smiled and said, 'Do come', I believed you would have said 'yes', if you had seen him. And we set off together.

"The ocean view from West Cliffs is very fine, as it is from many other points. Neither Prince Arthur nor I care for the gardens when the weather is fine to go further. He pointed out some of the places that Priscy and I are to visit with Mrs. Pell by water, and showed me the direction in which others lay, too far off to be seen. We went to Boscombe, not three miles away, and saw Boscombe Manor, the home of Shelley's family. And one morning we went to Branksome Chine. It was all so beautiful, the walk over the West Cliffs with its views of the ocean, and the chine widening inland with a little winding stream running through it suddenly broadens out into a lake—we should call it a very small one, but it is beautiful. It is one of the famous views of the South Coast.

"But you must not imagine we did all this in one

morning. There were two days more when, as I came out for my walk, I found him waiting for me. After that second morning he only lifted his hat—not that one the water had wet, but one that looked as if it had never been on before—and turned to accompany me as he bade me good morning; he took his permission for granted. This morning I did not meet him. But I started off alone much better prepared to see what was worth seeing than before he had told me so many things.

"On the way home a sudden turn in the road brought me face to face with him. A young man was beside him, I suppose the grandson he had said was coming. So, now, he has companionship. I bowed to him as I passed, but did not speak. He and the young man with him lifted their hats and bowed silently also, but very courteously. So I passed on, and the episode is over. I was glad, because I know I ought to be glad; but for that, I should have been sorry. This is a natural ending, and the best. It would have had to end soon, anyway.

"So, now that the episode is a thing of the past, I must go and have the story over with Mrs. Pell. When I report to her the very little there is to tell, she will want to know the one thing I can't tell her—who he is. And she won't accept 'Prince Arthur', as satisfactory. But no more can he tell who I am. I can only assure her what I have found out better and better every day, that he is a gentleman whether he is in society, or not, or has a pound to his name. But for this, as you know, there'd be no episode to tell.

"SHE'S AN UNUSUAL TYPE OF BEAUTY."

Mrs. Pell, however, will require more, since she could not say 'no' at the time. But she will make up for it now. Priscy is not in it. I did not even tell her, for that reason."

When the morning of her solitary walk Dorothy had passed the two gentlemen, she had not seen the younger wheel about and look after her, nor known that when he turned back to resume his walk with his grandfather, he commented to the latter, "She's an unusual type of beauty."

"She is an unusual type of anything that is fine," responded the old gentleman. "She shows birth and breeding. That girl has not come up of herself, as it is said of so many American girls to-day. She has been reared in a home. She is unconsciously full of its ideals. She is as invigorating as mountain air, and as pure. And when I called her 'Una' for lack of her real name and because it fitted her, what do you think she dubbed me?"

VI

A SURPRISING INTRODUCTION

"Did your old gentleman tell you all these things?" questioned Priscy aside, as at the excursion to Corfe Castle, Dorothy mysteriously produced a fund of information not found in guide or reference books.

"Yes; and a great deal more, Pell-Mell. He was really fine."

"Then you must be glad you went. It must have been worth your scolding from mamma."

"She did not say too much," answered Dorothy who the previous day had made her confession to Mrs. Pell and received her rebuke with a studied meekness that greatly amused Priscy. Mrs. Pell was deeply offended. Dorothy tried to repent. But she was afraid her repentance was not genuine, for she did not feel that she had sinned and she had much enjoyed the old gentleman's society. The day of the confession they had all driven about Bournemouth, and into Poole, one of its most attractive suburbs. The girls could not help enjoying it in spite of the dignity and reserve of their chaperon which dampened their ardor. But the visit to Corfe Castle was too much delight for any dignity to dampen. Even Mrs. Pell grew less chilly under Dorothy's interesting reminiscences.

"She's coming round," confided Priscy.

"I'm glad," returned the other. "I'm never going to do it again."

The following day it rained in torrents. Priscy curled up in an easy-chair with a novel and Dorothy made notes in her note-book, wrote her home letter, and sent Ned suggestions that had come to her in regard to their work upon a play from which they hoped great things, as well as writing him a racy account of her experiences, in which she did not forget "Prince Arthur".

After luncheon Priscy appeared in her raincoat.

"I can't stand it, Dorothy," she said. "Let's have a run. I want to see if English rain is exactly like ours?"

"I must see what Mrs. Pell thinks of our taking a walk," answered Dorothy demurely.

"No halfway business for you!" laughed the other. "But then step-mamma feels responsible," she added. "She is really good, if she is a little stiff."

"Nobody knows it better than I, Pell-Mell. And now I'm going to ask permission."

When the girls returned from their walk in the rain, their faces bright with exercise, their voices gay in recounting the sights they had seen in the shops, the arcade, the library, their arms weighted with books from the latter, they found Mrs. Pell in a mood which Priscy afterward described as "seraphic." With the air of one who has great news in reserve, she listened to the account of the interesting and amusing things that the girls had seen. When they had finished, which curiosity led them to do more quickly, she said:

"And now I have something to tell you." Then turning to Dorothy, she added in a tone that showed the girl that the past was forgiven in the more important affair of the moment: "What I have to tell will explain to you, Dorothy dear, why I was so decided as to your thoughtless action. You see you must choose your acquaintances with much care when you are so placed that those who rightly can be counted among the great are ready to include you in their list."

"Include me!" echoed the girl.

"Oh, well, in a way, through your association with one whose reputation has preceded him. I know I shall not be accused of vanity if I appreciate the pleasant position in which my husband's reputation has placed us all; for the request can have come only through Colonel Pell's well-earned scientific fame——"

"Oh, mamma, that's a beautiful prologue; but do begin on the play."

Her step-mother smiled, and resumed:

"While you were out I received a visit from Mrs. Asbury who, you know is at this hotel; you have both met her. She showed me a note to her from the Duke of Buccleugh—the Duchess is quite a friend of hers—asking her to bring about for him if possible the honor of an introduction to Mrs. Pell. Of course, I have no claim personally. It is all your father's, Priscilla; and I wonder the duke did not wait; but perhaps he does not know that he is coming. In any event, however, we must take the hand when he holds it out. I shall

receive him this evening; and I want you both to be with me."

"A real live duke!" said Dorothy with an acute perception of the snobbishness of Mrs. Pell's attitude. "I wonder how he will look? I hope I shall behave well, though it's Priscy, Colonel Pell's daughter, who is the one of consequence. Still, I want to do my friends and my country credit."

She was so exceedingly grave that Mrs. Pell glanced at her suspiciously. But the child could not be making fun of such an occasion as this. Mrs. Pell was a society woman, and members of the British nobility were by no means unknown to her. But it was especially gratifying to be sought out in this way through the prestige of her husband.

"What shall we wear, mamma?" asked Priscy. And both girls readily fell in with her suggestions.

"Really, I am excited, Pell-Mell," said Dorothy as the two sat in her room talking things over. "A real live duke!" she repeated. "I'm flustered," she laughed. "You see, it is very important. How in the world can we 'do' this country without viewing a duke? And next we must see a 'cotter', like the one Burns sings of in his 'Cotter's Saturday night'! We must be thorough, my child."

"You're strong on antithesis, Dorothy. But mamma is in the seventh heaven. So am I when papa is appreciated. But let's look over these library books; we have time."

That evening there were soft whispers and many

an interested glance, as the Duke of Buccleugh and a companion entered the drawing-room of the hotel and approached the window where Mrs. Asbury with Mrs. Pell and her charges awaited him. That lady cast looks of satisfaction at the girls. She had reason to be proud of them.

The two gentlemen came into the room from the side on which Dorothy was. She could not see them distinctly without turning to stare. She was looking across Mrs. Pell at Priscy who had never been lovelier. It was not until she heard Mrs. Asbury presenting his Grace of Buccleugh and Lord Dalkeith, and the strangers were bowing their greetings, that she looked up into the face of the august visitor.

She started and her color rose hotly. For a familiar countenance was turned to hers, and a pair of smiling eyes were gazing into her own, the eyes of her old gentleman of the morning walks!

"I hope you will forgive me, Una," said his well-known voice, "because I took an unfair advantage of you in discovering your identity. I wanted to see more of you. And I hope Miss Brooke will be no less willing to talk delightfully with me than she has been, because she knows now that I am no Prince Arthur, but only an old Scotsman whom people call Buccleugh. Miss Brooke has told you, Mrs. Pell," he added turning to her, "of our morning walks and talks concerning our different countries, and many other things of interest, together with the scenery?"

So, it was not Colonel Pell! It was not herself whose acquaintance the speaker was seeking! It was

Dorothy's! The impossible stranger whom she had reproved the girl for picking up was—the Duke of Buccleugh! Most amazing! But while these thoughts were running through Mrs. Pell's mind, she was smilingly assenting to the duke's question.

"An ideal companion for a morning stroll," his Grace was saying. "Or, indeed, for a long day's tramp, I'm sure, although we did not try it. She would never give out and leave a comrade in the lurch."

He greeted Priscy cordially and declared that had she accompanied her friend, he was sure she would have made many additions to the wit and wisdom of the talks. He spoke of Colonel Pell with admiration and showed knowledge of his attainments and successes, and expressed a pleasure in the prospect of meeting him which gratified the wife and the daughter of the scientist and greatly relieved Dorothy. She was in secret vastly amused and pleased at the turn of affairs; yet there was an embarrassment in it. She felt almost as if she were taking Colonel Pell's place.

The duke went on to say that he was asking some friends to an excursion to Ventnor, and had come especially to request that Mrs. and Miss Pell and Miss Brooke would do him the honor to be of the party.

"You are desirous to see the Isle of Wight, I remember," he said to Dorothy. "I shall be most happy to show you what I can of it. This is the grandson whom I told you of, Miss Brooke," he added turning abruptly to the young man, to find him gazing at

Dorothy with an attention that seemed to make it doubtful whether the duke would not do some of his escort duty by proxy.

Partly on account of Dorothy's inclination to pick up acquaintance with strangers, Mrs. Pell had altered her first intention and decided not to take any sea trips before her husband's arrival. But this inclination of Dorothy's suddenly appeared to her in a new aspect. Also, this was an invitation which could not be refused; indeed, she had ado to hide the depth of her satisfaction in it.

"Didn't I tell you, Pell-Mell," laughed Dorothy as the two girls in her room were talking over the incident, that my old gentleman was as much of a gentleman as the duke could be?"

"I remember. And you've done us a good turn. Step-mamma learns quickly, and she has had a lesson. For the rest of the summer you may pick up whom you please. Your judgment as to people will count—even to the cotter."

In the midst of their anticipations as to the coming excursion, Dorothy suddenly turned to her companion.

"What if I had not told Mrs. Pell anything about my old gentleman?" she asked.

A gay party assembled in the Duke of Buccleugh's motor-launch. Lord Dalkeith after he had welcomed Mrs. Pell and her companions, at first, as the host's grandson, divided his attentions among the guests and bided his time for a talk with Miss Brooke.

"Have you forgotten me, Miss Pell?" said a voice

in Priscy's ear; and Lord Hervey stood smiling at her, his hand outstretched. "Dalkeith and I are great friends," he said. "I was not coming here to-day, however; only I learned who some of the guests were to be. What a day! You couldn't do any better in America. Have you seen much of Dalkeith? Oh, only yesterday? How much he has lost; and now I'll not give him a chance to make it up. Ah, there he is back again talking to Miss Brooke. Upon my word, she is worth looking at! But not so much as——" He checked himself abruptly. "Do you know many of the people here, Miss Pell?" he asked. "But you don't care to do that just now," he added. "I'd like to show you some of the places as we pass them. With such a sky and such a sea, one doesn't want to talk to a crowd—— Or would you rather? It seems a waste of time."

"I'll wait for them to come to talk to me, since I'm the stranger," said Priscy.

His handsome face lighted. "And you see, I have the field at the moment. There'll be too many later. Would you like to sit here in the bows? You've not taken this trip at all yet? Ventnor, you know, is the chief city of the Undercliff, the most beautiful part of the island, and its climate is simply marvellous. Think of myrtles and fuschias and verbenas living in the open air all winter, and more than this, growing into great bushes. And then the cliffs! You can see those long before you arrive. It's a thirty-mile run to Ventnor."

In those thirty miles the two young people found

much to say to one another, nothing that the world might not have heard, yet often uttered with the air of being confidences, and seeming to make each better acquainted with the other. Nor did Lord Hervey desert his post when others joined them and turned the duet to a quartette, or even a chorus.

"He's talking to your mamma and Miss Brooke now," he said in answer to Priscy's inquiry as to their host. "And now Dalkeith has the floor, and he will keep it. He's a good fellow, but he likes to talk. Perhaps you are thinking that I do, too," he added catching sight of the girl's smile.

"I hope so, Lord Hervey. I like to do it. And I like to hear it. But the duke has gone back to them again. I've heard so much about his being an interesting talker, I should like to hear him. There are seats over there beside mamma and Dorothy."

And she rose and walked across to them, followed by Hervey.

As he sat there he more than once looked from Priscy to Dorothy with the secret question which was really the more charming girl? Both seemed equally bright, but in a different way, and in spite of the latter's gayety, Priscy the merrier of the two. Soon the little group became the center of a circle of new acquaintances more or less attentive to the strangers whom Buccleugh had honored with his attentions. At times Dorothy was silent, listening, watching, comparing the people about her with those she would have found under the same circumstances at home. At such

moments Dalkeith gazing at her found a new attraction in his wonder at her mood.

As they drew near the harbor, there was outlined against the sky the long wall of rugged cliffs broken by narrow and picturesque gorges, here as in Bournemouth and elsewhere on the South Coast called chines. From these cliffs the landslides that laid bare its rocky face in the days when the world was making repented of their desertion long ere they reached its base and lay piled terrace upon terrace in sunny beauty down to the shining pebbles of the shore. Ventnor less than a century ago a simple hamlet, has here blossomed in the delicious air into size and beauty like its own flowers, lying in its background of loveliness, a jewel in a splendid setting.

It was when the luncheon served to the duke's guests in one of the hotels of Ventnor was over that after a few words with Mrs. Pell, his Grace said to Dorothy:

"I know, Miss Brooke, that you would not be happy to leave here without a glimpse of Carisbrooke Castle where you remember Charles I was imprisoned for a time and, later, his children were also. I want you to know," added her host speaking to her now in a lower voice, "that I have especially in mind the interest you expressed in the Isle of Wight one of those mornings that you took pity on a lonely old fellow tramping off by himself and gave him an hour of your comradeship."

Soon the whole party was being whirled away on the road to Carisbrooke which was a short spin in

motor-cars. From there the guests were taken to other points of interest for which they had inclination—and time.

It was shortly before they embarked for their return trip that the two girls in the enthusiasm of their interest in everything they saw had hurried on in advance leaving Lord Hervey to follow with Mrs. Pell, and the others still further behind. The girls were walking at the edge of one of the narrow gorges which diversify the long, rugged surface of the cliff. They were looking back every now and then to call the attention of the others to something of interest, and were watching the city beyond them; the sky, the sea, anything but their own footsteps.

Suddenly, Priscy uttered a cry. She had slipped on one of the rocks, and would have fallen into the sheer descent had not Dorothy caught her. But Dorothy with no time to brace herself in preparation, was in danger of slipping also. If help came not at once, she could not hold back her companion; both would go down to a dreadful death. "Lean toward me, Pell-Mell," she said, and pressed her feet harder upon the rock. Yet in another instant she realized that she herself was beginning to slip. Another moment, and life would be over.

But the peril, although great, was brief. For Lord Hervey rushing forward, grasped and drew them both back to safety. At first all three stood silent, realizing the escape. Then as Hervey released them and Dorothy stepped back from Priscy, all three looked at one another, the girls still trembling.

"I am ashamed of having cried out so," said Priscy the next moment. And she moved forward again and bending down looked into the depths she had escaped.

"Don't do that!" cried Lord Hervey sharply. He was very pale. It was a wonder both had not been killed. As he spoke he put his arm about Priscy and drew her away decidedly from the edge of the gorge. And as for the instant he held her to him, in his delight at her escape he no longer doubted which of the girls was the more attractive to him. "You must not do that, Miss Pell," he repeated with authority. "You have been too near already." Then he glanced at Dorothy.

But she was standing well back from the edge that had been so nearly fatal to them both.

VII

NEW TALES OF CANTERBURY

Colonel Pell was much amused at Dorothy's "picked-up" acquaintance, and remarked to his wife that it was not the first time she had picked up somebody worth while.

"Nobody ought to know that better than we, Charlotte," he said. "Supposing she had not picked up Priscilla? I've no doubt that Pell-Mell, as Dorothy calls her, was a strange little waif enough, between my neglect and—and the other things that had gone against her. Mrs. Claflin, the principal at the school, gave me the whole story. Dorothy was an angel, and her influence over Priscilla from the first was marvellous. She opened the way for all the good things that followed. We should never have divined the present girl through the rags and tatters of looks and manners that clothed her when she appeared at Hosmer Hall. And then, Dorothy is brave. She fought and conquered the Pell pride that in my child and myself separated us after we had begun secretly to long for each other. I'll endorse Dorothy's head and heart 'every time'. And I'll follow in the wake of her 'pick-ups'," he finished with a laugh.

Later he said to Dorothy, "That duke of yours is a fine fellow."

"Isn't he?" cried the girl her eyes shining with pleasure. "He reminds me of what somebody said, that the higher up people are, the simpler they are."

He nodded approvingly. "You've hit the bull's-eye, Una," he answered her.

"Rex, you dear fellow," wrote Dorothy to her brother several days later, "I can't pick out the special times I want you—at Ventnor for instance, where the affair was a great success. It's one long miss of you; only, it's worse the more fun there is going on; you would so enjoy it. But, if we had dull moments, I might want you even more to set the ball rolling. But I'll tell you all, however, when I see you. Now you want to know what we are doing.

"I ought to call my letter "New Canterbury Tales." For after Colonel Pell had been here two days, we all started off for Canterbury. The duke said there was to be some especial service there worth hearing, even if we came back again for Salisbury and Stonehenge. He announced that, if agreeable, he would accompany us. But I think it is we who are accompanying him. Lord Dalkeith came on with his grandfather. Lord Hervey disappeared the morning we started, although I had supposed he was coming also. We made a merry party. Colonel Pell remarked that we were modern pilgrims to Canterbury, and each of us ought to tell a story. His Grace begged him to begin. Lord Dalkeith said Colonel Pell couldn't be "the man of lawes" according to the old chronicle, but he really was the man of wars. Mrs. Pell said that the duke

must be the "knight" and his grandson the "squire", and so we had it. Of course we made no attempt to follow out comparisons; we pitched in and told the stories. His Grace said that in place of all the rest of us giving a dinner on the road to the best story-teller, as in the old 'Tales', he would invite the prize winner to his own home near Edinburgh when we all returned from our Scottish tour, and the others of us should be invited to bear the victor company. The duchess had already heard of us, he said. She would write to Mrs. Pell. How delightful!

"But what will you do, if you tell the best story yourself?" I asked Buccleugh—I'm going to call him 'Buccleugh' in private, I'm so tired of saying 'the duke'. His eyes twinkled with fun, and he said that in that event we should all have to help him carry his honors; but he had no expectation of winning them. I think he should have won though, for his story interested me most of all, except my own—conceited creature! I don't mean that mine was the best; but it was the one I had planned for Mr. Harris, and I tried it on the company, and was most anxious to know how it was liked. It might give me a hint as to Mr. Harris' judgment of it. And then, I could not think of anything else as good.

"I must tell you the duke's story, however. He said it was true; only that he had changed the names. It happened years ago, when he was a young man. In one of the large cities of England, he did not say which one, a manufacturer had made an immense fortune in the boot and shoe business; he had the Midas touch.

But the narrator told us that like Midas he discovered that wealth is not everything; he developed a craving for social position; he must have it. A retired boot-maker could never associate with earls and princes, not even had he wealth enough to buy up all their estates; he could not buy up themselves. So, Mr. Edmonds silently disappeared. People who recollected to inquire for him decided that he had gone abroad to enjoy his fortune. But about a year later Count d'Estagne, descendant of one of the oldest families of the French nobility, appeared in London. He talked English with a slight French accent, but remarkably well, but evidently preferred the language of the land of his adoption. He took a fine house in London, lived in style, was received everywhere and gave lavish entertainments, welcoming to his house some of the oldest and proudest of the English peerage. At times, to be sure, he seemed more filled with anxiety than so fortunate an individual ought to have been; but in society he threw off his cares, whatever they were, and was the gayest of the gay. He was talked of everywhere, and was appreciated for his fine entertainments and his ready wit, both of which he needed. For more than a year his triumphs went on. But alas! he had made an enemy, and this enemy worked his revenge. He discovered that Count d'Estagne's was an extinct title bought up and worn by Victor Edmonds whose mother was a French-woman; and he traced Mr. Edmonds to his boot and shoe manufactory. But, Rex, you should have heard the duke tell the story of the rising popularity of the spurious count, his ris-

ing confidence, his haughty airs, the last great dinner he gave at which several noblemen and ladies of rank were present, for his French wife was vastly attractive; and then in the midst of the feast, of the apparition of the enemy turned questioner, and answering his own questions; and the final scene in which the mask was torn from the face of the pretended nobleman; and the dramatic departure of the enraged victims of his deception. The story was very droll, and so well told. But I could not help pitying the poor man who was his own victim most of all. His Grace ended by remarking that people were more sensible in these times, and that all that would have been necessary to-day would have been the assurance that Mr. Edmonds had all the money he assumed to have.

"Mrs. Pell's story was short, but good; and Colonel Pell had an army adventure that quite wrung us up. Everybody did well. But, Rex, they voted me the prize. I think it was largely out of politeness. But Pell-Mell insists that it was not, that mine was really the best. So, I'm going to stay conceited!

"If you wish an account of the especial occasion which took us to Canterbury at that particular time, I'll read it to you from my note-book when I come home. And if you desire a detailed description of Canterbury with the fragment of its old walls and its Dane John or Donjon mound, and of the Cathedral consecrated in 597 A. D.—not this one though! and of its different rebuildings and additions; its central tower; its Dean's chapel; its north transept, the Martyrdom where Thomas à Becket's murder took place, over

seven hundred years ago; its Norman and Early English arches, and a hundred other wonders and beauties, I refer you to Baedeker, or some other authority.

"But this part won't be in Baedeker. As we were all in the Cathedral and Lord Dalkeith was telling me how when he was a boy, he had one day been dared by a companion and had jumped down from a part of the ruins of the old wall and nearly got himself into trouble with the authorities, he stopped in the midst of his story to cry, 'What's that?' Priscy had wandered off by herself to make personal investigations. And from where she was standing just beyond the tomb of the Black Prince came the sound of voices, although we could see only her. 'It must be the ghost of the Black Prince', he said to the company, for by this time we were all listening. At the moment, however, a movement brought a second figure into sight, its back turned toward us. 'He doesn't look like a ghost,' said Colonel Pell. 'If he is, he must have enjoyed his life elsewhere, for he is very merry over it,' declared the duke.

"With that, both figures turned and came toward us.

"'Why, Hervey, you scamp!' cried Lord Dalkeith. 'Why didn't you tell us you were coming?'

"'I like leeway to turn about my mind in,' drawled Lord Hervey with a droll look as he strolled along beside Pell-Mell."

VIII

AS THINGS COME

At Canterbury the Duke of Buccleugh left the others and went to Scotland, renewing his request to them to visit his home near Edinburgh, an invitation to be more formally given later.

Colonel Pell had enjoyed his society, but he saw him depart without regret. Under the circumstances it had been impossible not to fall in with the nobleman's suggestion of going to Canterbury as they did, especially as he himself was to go there then. But Colonel Pell liked making out his own itinerary and would have preferred to take in Canterbury on his direct route to London. It was of no real consequence, however, and the trip had certainly been pleasanter as it was. The two young men also departed for London, promising to meet the others again there. From Canterbury Colonel Pell took his party in a roundabout way back to London, stopping here and there on the route.

The night they spent at Salisbury Dorothy wrote Ned Longley something further that had come to her concerning the play they were writing, and made criticisms upon points in the part of it which he had sent her to read.

"Isn't it odd," she wrote him, "that when I really

think I am miles away from this work and my head is full of something different, then a sudden suggestion about it will pop up, sometimes very good, or I think so?

"You ought to see these places, Ned. You know so much more history than I do, that they would say more to you than they do to me, and that's a good deal. I was interested in Brighton because it is fashionable and one likes to be in the midst of things. Then, the place is so often mentioned in English novels. And Tunbridge-Wells, after Bath the oldest inland watering-place in England, is a very interesting old town with its fine views and walks and drives. Colonel Pell wanted to see Portsmouth on account of somebody or something there, and I wanted to see the most perfect fortress in Great Britain. But I must own that the batteries and ramparts and forts made me long to have peace all over the world. But I wish you could see them.

"To-day we've been to Stonehenge. In our drive over Salisbury Plain we began to look out for Stonehenge almost as soon as we started. Colonel Pell wanted to walk there; and Priscy and I would have done it—although we might have flagged on the way back when the excitement was over. But Mrs. Pell had no idea of walking eight miles, and I think she was right. I am not going to describe Stonehenge; you must have read about it dozens of times. But no book can make you feel as you do looking at those old, old monuments of nobody knows exactly what. Colonel Pell says that the Druid theory has followed

so many other theories that it is at least questionable. But at all events, there are the old stones to tell that somebody placed them there, if we cannot guess who. Some wise men wonder if they were sun worshipers? But they all know as much about it as we do, and I dare say not much more.

"As to Salisbury Cathedral, no wonder it is considered one of the finest, if not the very finest in England. But you shall not have a sermon either upon it, or in it.

"We are going to Bath, and I'm not sure what other places, before we go back to London. I know that some day you will see all these sights, and more. I shall never be satisfied until you do; it will help you, and the plays. Dearest messages to your mother; I am going to write her. And my love to Grace. It does me good even to think of her; there always seems to be about her the strength and restfulness one needs. Don't work too hard. But we must make that play hum—and we shall some day."

It was on their reaching London again that Priscy asked: "Do you really think, Dorothy, that those Englishmen will look us up while we are here?"

Dorothy's gaze was keen, and she laughed a little. "What do you think about it yourself, Pell-Mell?" she questioned.

A flicker of color came into the girl's face and for a minute she busied herself in a vigorous brushing of her hair; for she was in her room preparing for dinner

and Dorothy who was already dressed was with her. At last she turned and faced her questioner.

"I believe they will," she said also smiling.

"So do I," returned the other. "It's good fun, Priscy, to have English acquaintances, isn't it?"

"Yes, and Scotch ones."

"It makes things livelier," added Dorothy. "And we get into the ways of things better."

"Indeed we do," acquiesced the other. "Which one do you think the more interesting?"

"Which do you?" retorted Dorothy, this time laughing outright. "It is easy to see that one at least thinks you so, Pell-Mell," she continued. "Lord Dalkeith's sentiments are not quite so transparent; but I've no doubt he considers his friend a wise fellow."

"To keep out of his way you mean, Dorothy?"

"Take care, Pell-Mell. We are only having a holiday."

"It may turn out a long one."

"For you?"

"No, indeed, for you, Dorothy Brooke, with your picking up dukes and their grandsons," the girl laughed. "Lord Dalkeith is his grandfather's heir, did you know?" pursued Priscy. "His father is dead. The strawberry leaves are in sight."

"Now, Priscy, I don't like you."

"My dear, I'm only quoting what I've heard. No, no, 'twas not mamma. She doesn't talk in that way. It was Mrs. Asbury."

"Mrs. Asbury gave herself the trouble to inform

me also," returned Dorothy gravely. "So you don't believe, Priscy, that I'm only having a vacation?"

Her listener knew that Dorothy was very much in earnest when she spoke in that tone and called her "Priscy" which she seldom did in their intimate talks. She said no more. But all the same, she thought it possible that Dorothy would change her mind.

And Dorothy?

She was as she had said having her vacation. And, thus far at least, nothing had interfered with the lightness and brightness of it. It was true that she was shadowed by regret for those who were not enjoying it with her. But these were thin clouds that vanished in the sunshine of new pleasure, and in the hope of what would one day come to them.

That same day two young men were lunching together at an exclusive London club. One was tall, slender and handsome, the young man who had made himself so agreeable to Colonel Pell's party on shipboard—Lord Hervey. The other carried himself with an erectness that made the most of his medium height and showed to the best advantage a figure strong and active rather than graceful. His face was strong also, sensible, alert, manly; but it would have been flattery to call him handsome. The manners of both were easy, yet with an air of authority as of those born to command and accustomed to obedience.

"You are going to see them here?" asked Lord Dalkeith.

"I intend to—yes. And you?"

"Why, in a way I'm bound to do it. We're under pledge of family hospitality, you see."

"Your grandfather's invitation? Oh, I don't see how that binds you—unless you desire to have it—eh?"

"As we are going practically the same route, it would be rather amusing to take it together, that is, off and on. We can meet them here and there on the way, and not be under command of the military."

"We might be tied to something worse," answered Hervey. "He's a good sort."

"I see you're disposed to take in the whole family," laughed Dalkeith. "They are unobjectionable, to be sure. But quite a large mouthful, Hervey."

"You're leaping to conclusions in the dark," returned the other hotly. "That's worse."

"Oh, I'm not leaping. I am only capering, for the fun of the thing," answered Dalkeith giving his companion a shrewd glance. "You know my interests are elsewhere, Hervey," he added.

The other gave a sigh of relief. It had appeared to him that his friend had really not been far short of his own earnestness. But if this were not so, and he were disposed to regard past suggestions, although hardly to be called obligations, so much the better, and he answered more lightly,

"That suits me, you know."

"Well, then, how is it to be? Shall we between whiles hang on the skirts, or I should say on the coat tails of the admirable Pell on his route in Scotland, here, there and anywhere—or nowhere, if we

prefer it?" inquired Dalkeith in a jocular tone, but with an earnest eye.

"Agreed," returned the other. Again he told himself it was well his companion had the old arrangement in mind; and he silently resolved that Griselda should help him to keep it.

IX

LADY GRISELDA

When Dorothy was a child of five, and Olive only two years old, was still the baby, three children were playing upon the lawn of a beautiful estate in the eastern part of England. The youngest was a girl of eight; her brother, ten, was two years older than Rex Brooke and a year the junior of the boy playing with himself and his sister. But there seemed to be more difference between these two, because the guest was more mature for his years. From that time and even earlier, up to the present when the children had reached manhood and womanhood, they had been much together. Their fathers who had been friends had hoped and planned that the tie binding the three should strengthen with the years and that the comradeship between the girl and her brother's friend should grow into love and marriage. The thought had also been long in the minds of the young couple. The two could never be said to have fallen in love with one another; but the friendship had strengthened to an affection based on mutual esteem and liking and largely due to propinquity. Lord Dalkeith was now twenty-five, still looking decidedly older than his friend, Hervey, and Lady Griselda Hervey was twenty-two the summer that Colonel Pell brought his wife and daughter and Dorothy Brooke to England.

Dorothy was then within a few months of her nineteenth birthday; and Priscy Pell was a year and more her junior.

Lady Griselda had met no one to prove to her how small a part of her heart was Dalkeith's. But in her life she had known a great sorrow through the death of her older brother who had been her idol. He was a young man when she was a child, and a brother worthy of her affection, very handsome, high-minded, warm-hearted, devoted to the child, a scholar and a most interesting companion. He traveled a great deal. When Griselda was sixteen the calamity of his loss had fallen upon the family; for its flower, the heir, had died suddenly in a foreign land. He had been in a train accident in Italy. It was thought at first that he would recover. But the following day dangerous symptoms had developed and before any member of his family could reach him, he was dead. He had been taken to a hospital where he had been admirably cared for. He was a much greater loss to Lady Griselda than Dalkeith would have been, not from lack of worth in the latter, but because the brother was so much more a part of her life than the prospective lover. In dwelling upon his suffering and her loss of him, she grew melancholy, for a time even morbid. It was with satisfaction that the other members of her family learned that she had seized upon what would prove a resource and, they hoped, a healing to her. For she had determined that there should be a worthy memorial to her lost brother, and that she would give it to him. But for the efficiency and kind-

ness of the hospital, he would have died without even the small alleviation and comfort he had received. Yes, Lady Griselda would build a memorial to her brother, and this should be a hospital scientifically built and finely equipped. At twenty-one she would inherit her mother's fortune, a part of which consisted of large estates in Perthshire. Here she decided that the hospital should be built. Others should be comforted as her brother had been; and she trusted that these ministrations would often aid in bringing returning health to the sufferers, and joy in place of despair to those who loved them.

On all sides she had met with resistance. Her friends had endeavored to dissuade her; her family from angry opposition had relapsed into waiting for her strange fancy to vanish like the dream it had seemed to them to be. It was true that at first they had welcomed it in the incipient stage, because it seemed to occupy and soothe her, and they had never doubted that it would pass away. But when she came of age she entered a training school for nurses to learn practically things that were needed; and this year plans for the buildings were under discussion. Lord Hervey, her only brother now, was proud of her energy, although he deprecated her absorption in the work. He had spoken of her only casually to Mrs. Pell and Dorothy although the latter's interest and appreciation were great; but it was to Priscy that he had told many incidents of his sister's life.

"When Griselda had secured her admission to the hospital in which she was to study," he said one day

to the latter, "how do you think, Miss Pell, that the child attempted to enter? She went there with her trunks and her lady's maid."

"Oh!" cried Priscy. "But—" She stopped.

"Yes; wasn't it funny?" said the young man. "That was all she knew of the requirements of the work she had undertaken. She had never traveled alone in her life." Priscy listening silently remembered her own long journey from the little mining town beyond Seattle and a part of the way across a continent to Hosmer Hall. "She had never packed or unpacked a trunk, or done up her own hair, or waited upon herself in any way," Hervey went on. "Imagine her entering upon a nurse's course—so exacting. But my sister has no end of pluck, Miss Pell. She sent away her maid and all but one of her trunks, put on the nurse's rig, and went at it. She has not taken a full course; that was not necessary. But she has learned thoroughly how things ought to be done; and she can do them, too. She will carry out her plans; I can see that now."

"She is splendid!" cried his listener. "I should like to meet her."

"And she to meet you," he answered his eyes bright with satisfaction as he bent them upon the girl. His sister would of course meet all the party. But he wanted her and Miss Pell to be friends.

This conversation about the Lady Griselda had taken place when her brother and Priscy were at Canterbury.

The day following the arrival of the latter with her father and mother and Dorothy in London Lord Hervey brought his sister to see the ladies.

She was a slight, fair girl pleasing rather than handsome, with the strength of resolution and a touch of sadness in her face. Priscy was attracted to her at once. Dorothy read power in her face and, she believed, wilfulness also; but at first she was not sure that her previous knowledge of Lady Griselda had not led her to imagine this. Her manners were full of simplicity and grace, and the modulations of her voice were, it seemed to Priscy, as beautiful as Dorothy's, although the voice was not so musical. Directly upon meeting they all seemed to be acquainted. Lady Griselda declared that she would be delighted to act as cicerone, and begged that Miss Pell and Miss Brooke would make use of her whenever they were so inclined.

"I believe I can show you some things of interest that Colonel Pell will not think of," she added with a look and smile for Mrs. Pell.

Lord Hervey talked little; he wished to give his sister opportunity to make her way into the interest of the Americans.

"Isn't she charming?" cried Priscy when the visitors had departed! "Isn't she, mamma?"

"Yes, very charming," answered Mrs. Pell.

"Isn't she, Dorothy?" questioned the girl missing her friend's voluntary praise.

"Yes, she is, Pell-Mell—and a good deal besides."

"What besides, Dorothy?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Pell. But everything fine, of course. She has abundance of energy, or she could not have done and planned what she has; and nobody can help admiring her devotion to the brother she has lost. And she is to prove this in a way that will do so much good. She is admirable." Dorothy's tone was decided, but it lacked enthusiasm.

"What is the matter with her, dearie?" insisted Priscy. "You are always so ready to praise, there must be something."

"No, Pell-Mell, there is nothing. I like her—yes, indeed! She is really delightful. But if I lived with her a thousand years, I couldn't love the whole of her as much as I do your little finger—there now, I've said it."

At which speech Priscy embraced the speaker, all three having before this time returned to the privacy of Mrs. Pell's sitting-room. "You are a funny girl," she said. "But it's an oddity that's dear to me."

Meanwhile, Lady Griselda being whirled away in a motor-car, answered her brother's questions satisfactorily. "Two lovely girls, Henry, and very well mannered," she commented. "Which is the handsomer, you ask? Well, I think Miss Brooke is; she looks like one of us." But seeing his face fall, she added: "Little Miss Pell is high-bred too, and she is as sweet as a rosebud—that's what you want, isn't it?" she laughed.

"I want exactly what you think," he returned stiffly.

"Then, that's exactly what I think, brother mine. And I like Mrs. Pell, though I imagine I should not if she didn't like me."

X

COLONEL PELL INTERCEDES

"Oh, no, it's quite impossible," said Mrs. Pell decidedly. "Go shopping all by yourselves in London! Why, I should never think of such a thing. And it's raining hard."

"We don't mind the rain," cried Priscy.

Colonel Pell who was watching Dorothy saw her lips shut and knew that she had much ado not to open them. His daughter's face had fallen so that, had it been a barometer, it would have predicted a storm.

"And why not, Charlotte?" he asked. "Are you afraid they'll get lost? Or run away with? The only real danger I foresee, and it is serious, is danger to their pocketbooks."

"You think we'll get them picked?" exclaimed Priscy.

"He thinks we'll pick them ourselves," smiled Dorothy trying to make the best of her disappointment.

"If I were able, I would go with you," said Mrs. Pell. "I hate to disappoint you. But my head aches too badly even to talk it over with you. You must take it on faith for the present that my judgment is right."

Dorothy did not look at Priscy, but in silence lifted her hand to take off the hat that she had put on in happy expectation.

Colonel Pell glanced from one girl to the other with a sympathy which both read.

"Let them try it, Charlotte," he said. "I'll be sponsor for them both; they'll turn up all right. Priscilla is not a Pell, if she is not equal to that." His daughter gave him a quick glance and was silent. Was he remembering that ride she had taken across the continent years ago, a part of the way entirely alone? "And as to Dorothy," he went on, "we know she is equal to anything."

Mrs. Pell did not answer immediately. She was thinking of the morning walks at Bournemouth; she believed that Dorothy was equal to anything. In those nobody could say she had done wrong, or even made a mistake in following her own instincts and judgment; both had proved good. Still, this was different. Yet Colonel Pell was willing to risk his own daughter, so it might be all right for Priscy to go. But what would Mrs. Brooke think of Dorothy's doing it? She asked the girl.

"My mother would leave it to you, Mrs. Pell," returned Dorothy reluctantly.

"Oh, come, Charlotte," said Colonel Pell again. "Do let them go. I know it will be fun for them. I want to see what they will do."

"But, papa," questioned Priscy suddenly, "you won't come after us to see how we get on, will you? I'd rather stay at home than be tagged like a child."

"So would I, if I were you, Priscilla," he answered. "No, if your mamma says 'yes' to you, I'll not tag you at all—honor bright!" he laughed. "That is, if you will promise to come home in fair season, even if by doing it you miss the best bargain of the lot."

"Oh, yes, we will," cried both. "We will, Mrs. Pell," added Dorothy.

"You will put them into a hansom, or a motor-car, if they go, Randolph?" inquired his wife.

"Oh, we don't want either!" exclaimed Dorothy. "We'll take an omnibus, and we'll hail it ourselves. Independence is to be our boast; that's a part of the fun." As she spoke she thought of the little American flag, Ned's gift, which she was fond of wearing to remember her colors, although she often tucked it partly out of sight in some fold of her gown.

"Yes, you are right," answered Colonel Pell. "If you are to go alone, that will be safest."

Before quitting the room Priscy went to her father, put her arms about his neck and kissed him. Then she turned to Mrs. Pell. "Will it make your head-ache worse if I kiss you our thanks, too, mamma?" she asked, waiting for the answer before she went toward her.

"It will do me good, dear," said Mrs. Pell. "Go, children and have a good time; and be sure to be home in season."

"Or I shall certainly send the town crier out for you besides coming myself," admonished her father. And with a laugh and a pledge, the girls departed, their faces beaming.

"Almost nineteen years old and not able to go shopping alone, if it is in London!" thought Dorothy scornfully. But she said nothing of the kind. She cautioned instead: "We really must look out not to get our pockets picked, Pell-Mell. If we do, we shall never hear the last of it."

The girls long remembered that morning. They went to some of the famous London shops; and, later, they strolled into quaint little places the like of which they had never seen, and there bought odds and ends which they did not want, because they could not look about and ask questions and then not buy something. They found many of the goods in the larger shops like those they would have found in the same class of shops at home. Yet many things were different.

"It would be a good idea to send some of our shop girls over her to take lessons in manners," said Dorothy as the two moved away from one of the counters. "How politely that girl said to us that she was sorry they had not the gloves we wanted. I remember the last time I bought any gloves in our own beloved country, the clerk was so busy discussing with a companion the party she and her neighbor seemed to have been to the night before, that I had to stand and wait until she condescended to notice me at all. Then she handed out what I asked to look at as if I had bored her by interrupting her animated conversation with her neighbor for such a trifle. You would have thought it was the talking that she was paid to do, and that out of courtesy, she condescended

to show goods once in a while. And there are more like her than there ought to be."

"But you must set one thing off against another," returned Priscy. "You remember what Rose wrote you about the girls in the restaurants here, how they would leave any order a woman might give them to wait first upon a man who might have come in meanwhile? I suppose they expected a bigger tip."

"I stand corrected, Pell-Mell," said Dorothy.

"That's pretty, isn't it?" said one of the shop girls holding up a piece of dress goods over which Dorothy had for the moment bent—to Priscy's surprise.

"Yes; but it's not quite what I want," answered the other. "Please show me that piece on the row the third from the top."

The girl hastened to take down the goods. In addition to her trained alacrity, she was moved by what she read in Dorothy's tone and manner, something which made her feel that these strangers recognized in her, not merely the machine that served them, but a girl of about their own age with the feelings and the needs of humanity. But that piece also proved undesirable.

"How do you like this?" questioned the girl taking up still another piece. "That's pretty, isn't it now?" And she turned it this way and that to show off its beauties. "It's pretty, isn't it?" she repeated, but not insistently.

"Ye—es," Dorothy sometimes answered to the queries accompanying the display of different goods; "but it is not quite what I want." She was desirous

to buy if possible, for the girl was taking so much trouble. And then it was probable that the two shoppers were not unaware of the admiring glances given them by this young woman so removed from them in circumstances, so one with them in her longings for all the delights of girlhood. After a prolonged search Dorothy ordered a generous number of yards from two pieces of goods at that counter. As she was waiting for her change, Priscy whispered:

"Will you tell me, Dorothy, if these are for yourself?"

"Hardly, Pell-Mell. I should have preferred to choose exactly what I should buy for myself," she added. "But I know the tastes of the wearers, and my fancies are neither Bella's, nor Nora's."

"Oh!" said Priscy.

"You know how long they have been with us," continued the other. "I can never forget how good they were in mother's long illness, when I was at Hosmer Hall and came home. You see, to have materials for suits selected in London on purpose for them—you ought to see their faces when I tell them. The quality of the material is quite as good as some of my own and they are not in bad taste," she went on, "only, rather more striking than I should like for myself. If I should choose as if for myself exactly, they would be pleased at my thought of them. But now I believe they will be delighted with the gowns also." Then as she stood waiting, she studied the shop girl's thinness and pallor and look of being only half fed. As she took her change, she glanced about

her. No one was looking. Suddenly she slipped a gold piece into the girl's hand, and meeting her astonished eyes, she said with a warning glance: "Buy something pretty for yourself to remember two Americans who thank you for having been so patient. Good morning."

She turned away quickly, and the movement brought her face to face with a floor walker who was at the moment giving an order to another shop girl. Had the latter been the dirt under his feet, he could not have spoken more contemptuously, and had he been grinding it under his heel, he could not have been more harsh. Dorothy's face flushed, her eyes flashed with anger as she walked the few steps that separated her from the speaker. He was probably too much of a pachyderm to feel the scorn in her look. But she was too fully aroused for silence. She could not reprove him, or defend the poor girl whom for an unknown mistake he had reproved so brutally. But with a decision in her low tones that must have reached him, she said to him:

"As a purchaser here I wish to commend for your approval this clerk of whom I have just been buying," and she pointed to the girl standing mute and amazed behind the counter. "But for her patience and her tact and skill in showing me goods, I should have left the shop without making a purchase. She is of value to your business."

The floor walker looked astonished, then annoyed; and the next moment he disappeared.

"There are two things, one on the top of another,

that you would have had no chance to do if step-mamma had been here, you sweet old Dorothy," whispered Priscy as they moved away.

"And they are things I don't have to report to her," smiled the other. "I suppose I ought not to have spoken to that man, but I couldn't help it. And that poor little girl! I hope she will buy something good to eat; but I couldn't tell her so."

And so the poor girl did. But not for herself.

Both Dorothy and Priscy bought gifts for those at home, until at last the former said, "We shall have to confess we've had our pockets picked pretty thoroughly—by ourselves."

It was when they were coming out of a droll little shop where the proprietor was so interested in Americans that he wanted to see America himself but knew he never should see it, that they almost literally ran up against Lord Dalkeith. He was delighted to see them, and insisted upon accompanying them to their hotel. It was of no use that they protested they were out with the express purpose of paddling their own canoe, as American slang had it.

After he had paid his respects to Colonel Pell and departed, the latter with a twinkle in his eye, said to the girls, "So, you picked up your milord?"

"No, we didn't, Colonel Pell!" retorted Dorothy. "He insisted upon picking us up, though we told him we didn't want it."

"It's all the same, I imagine," he said.

"It's quite different!" retorted Dorothy warmly.

"As you like," he laughed.

XI

IN THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

Every day Dorothy felt more deeply the subtle attraction of London with its myriad voices of the past, its myriad wonders of the present, its infinite resources of interest and entertainment, its unlimited fascinations, its inexhaustible charm. She and Priscy often went out with Colonel Pell when his wife was tired, or did not care for the places to which they were going. At such times they walked a great deal and saw much more than if they had been whirled along in a motor-car, although for the longer trips they appreciated this conveyance.

Often they started in omnibus or tram which ran nearest their destination. Priscy shuddered at the two-penny tubes, and was sure that in event of accident, they would all be killed.

Dorothy walked through Paternoster Row with the feeling of being haunted by the ghosts of the characters of Dickens and other writers; and when she saw the errand boys running through the narrow passages, into the archways and up the worn stairs carrying trays with lunches and mugs of beer and returning with empty plates and mugs, she felt as if the characters themselves were living in the flesh in these mysterious rooms and enacting their various rôles,

more or less resembling those which the great novelist had assigned to them. She sought out the fantastic little shops, and now and then bought quaint books, remarking to Priscy that such a volume would be of use to Ned and herself in their references to incidents, or customs, or perhaps costumes of their *dramatis personae*.

But on what Mrs. Pell considered the more important expeditions she made one of the party. Dorothy cared less for the splendid furniture and tapestries of Windsor Castle—for the most interesting parts are not shown to visitors—than for the historic associations of Hampton Court.

"If I had been Cardinal Wolsey," she said, "I should have hated to give up all this to that tyrannical Henry, and have to pretend that I had built it for him. But then, it was to save his honors—and, after all, he couldn't save them."

In the South Kensington Museum they found a model of a tapestry loom not unlike the Navajo Indian loom for weaving their blankets. They wandered through many picture galleries; they tried the Whispering Gallery at St. Paul's; they visited the Houses of Parliament, and many other places where they longed for time to see in detail things of which they had only glimpses. But the British Museum made Dorothy draw a deep breath of wonder and desire. For this she thought she ought to have at least a year. It was at the doorway of one of the rooms in the Museum that Mrs. Pell, pausing on the threshold, looked in reflectively.

"Is there anything in there I want to see?" she questioned of herself aloud.

"I don't know what you want to see, madam," returned the imperturable policeman guarding the portal.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed her husband. Dorothy who was behind with Priscy, glanced with sparkling eyes at the latter who snickered, and even Mrs. Pell smiled as she passed the man. "I don't know what you want to see, madam," became a phrase of the two girls sometimes when they were sure of not being overheard.

In many of these excursions Lady Griselda and her brother and Lord Dalkeith were among the sightseers; and the latter declared that he saw with better eyes than he had ever done before. Lady Griselda had a way at times of claiming his attentions as if these belonged to her. This he secretly resented, not only because it took him from Dorothy, but also because he feared it would seem to her that what the other was claiming was hers of right. But at most it was Lady Griselda's only by assumption; he was not betrothed to her. Possibly, he never would be. But his Scotch caution forbade him to make any open break before he should be sure of himself. He had perceived his grandfather's watchful eyes upon him at Ventnor, and upon the trip to Canterbury, and they had warned him that by the duke the old plans were cherished.

Lord Dalkeith was not of sufficient interest to Lady Griselda to make her really jealous of him. But she would not give to another, if she could help it, what she felt should be her own, and she was too proud

to brook interference. The American was a very pretty girl, but she was merely a passing interest; Lady Griselda herself was the constant reality. In the meetings and excursions of the young people during the time that they were all in London there were many opportunities for courtesies which might be simply such, or might carry a deeper meaning according to the manner in which they were rendered. Since the day at Ventnor when Lord Hervey had learned his own mind, he had expressed this by his presence and attentions. But he had always done it with care not to betray too soon the depth of his purpose; for he believed that Miss Pell was unconscious of this, while she readily perceived his fancy and was, it seemed to him, responsive to it, as she was to the other of her amusements of the summer. He must at least hope that he had won her before he startled her by his earnestness. He was aware that Colonel Pell was watching him lynx-eyed; but thus far the young man had received nothing of the too marked welcome to which his rank and wealth had accustomed him when he had chanced to pay a passing attention to any lady of his acquaintance. The young man was greatly attracted by the absence of this solicitude, indeed, the indifference of Colonel Pell who seemed only desirous that his daughter should thoroughly enjoy herself light-heartedly.

Thus the days passed until a fortnight had gone by and it was the beginning of the third week in London, which was to end their stay there for the present, when one morning Colonel Pell who knew the pleasure the

visit would give to Dorothy, proposed that they go to the Old Curiosity Shop in Lincoln's Inn Fields from which Dickens drew the inspiration for his story. Mrs. Pell and the whole party of young people filed into the shop that morning where an old man and an old woman, the very prototypes of some of Dickens' characters were in charge.

As Colonel Pell was writing the names of the party in the visitors' book, Dorothy began to question the woman, an occupation very interesting to her; the quaintness of the woman's appearance and of her answers bore out the first impression, and the girl began to be conscious that she was gathering seed which at some day might flower into episode in story or play.

But Lord Dalkeith interrupted this enjoyment by asking her to look at some of the things in the little shop. Perhaps, however, he was not to blame for himself looking far more at her than at these. She was genuinely inerested in them. Lord Hervey was talking to Priscy, as he usually seemed to be doing when she was not talking to him. Mrs. Pell was looking about her with the interest an educated woman must feel in the oddities grouped in that small space, the incongruity of arrangement often corresponding to that of the aggregation. Lady Griselda, slightly withdrawn from the others, was holding in her hand a bit of old pewter ware that she had picked up to examine. She was not examining it though, but was watching Dorothy and Lord Dalkeith. Did he really care for the girl? Or was he only amusing himself

with her brightness and prettiness? Griselda never accorded to Dorothy a higher type of looks than prettiness; in her judgment beauty was not a characteristic of the American. Yet she confessed to herself that Dorothy did possess at times a haughtiness which in Lady Griselda's opinion should accompany only birth and title.

It was when the group was thus arranged, and Dalkeith was making himself unusually interesting by relating some unpublished anecdotes of Dickens, that some one came up to the door of the little shop and stood a moment watching the scene before him. He took in the whole situation, and as in talking Dorothy's companion moved nearer to her, the door opened sharply and the stranger entered.

"Why, Longley!" cried Colonel Pell advancing with outstretched hand. "This is fine! Did you arrive by aeroplane? And when? We've not heard a word of your coming."

"I got in yesterday," answered Longley. "Mr. Harris sent me over quite unexpectedly on some business for the magazine. Mr. Bridges was good enough to endorse my coming; and both insisted that since I was here, I should take a vacation. I put the business into train yesterday and this morning, that is, all of it that I can do for a day or two; and then I ran up to your hotel to begin the vacation by seeing my friends. I found you had left a partial itinerary, so I caught you."

"Yes, I did," returned the other, "because I was expecting a telegram at any time and ought to receive

it as soon as it should arrive. It was so slight a chance, however, that I risked it—and it brought you. It is not often one gets so much better than he looks for."

"Thank you," smiled Longley.

"But did I put down the Old Curiosity Shop on my list?" added Colonel Pell suddenly. "For it was an afterthought, because I was so sure Miss Brooke would be in her element here."

"No, you did not," said Longley. "But I came to it on the way to places you did put down; and I was in your mood and couldn't resist coming in, especially after I had looked in."

He greeted Mrs. Pell and Priscy who stood nearest him.

And then Dorothy's hand lay in his. As he had entered the shop her back had been toward him and it was Dalkeith's face which he had seen. But whether the light of interest in her eyes as she turned was at sight of himself, or was due to something that her companion had been saying to her, Longley could not tell; he was inclined to think it was the latter, for she greeted him so very quietly. He bowed to Lady Griselda and the other strangers, and for a few minutes the conversation became general.

But Lady Griselda did not join in it, or only in monosyllables when addressed. She could not take her eyes from Longley, except when she feared she was observed. "What a man!" she said to herself. "How handsome! What dignity and grace and ease he has, and how brilliantly he talks!" In truth, Ned did not say much, but in all he did say there was to one listen-

er's mind at least, power and distinction. She looked from Lord Dalkeith to him, and smiled to herself. Really, she had only now begun to see and understand life. She suddenly perceived that it had possibilities of interest which she had never fathomed. At last she drew up to the others and began to talk to the stranger, to ask him about America. He answered her at some length, wondering as he did so why when he had first seen her, she had been watching Dalkeith, and wondering still more how deep was the interest which the latter's face and whole attiude to Dorothy had declared? His anger rose against the stranger. What had he to do with the girl who was so much to himself, whom he had known so many years, and loved? While talking with Lady Griselda he was conscious of all that went on between the two so near him, and still angry with the young man whom he called to himself "the interloper."

"We're going up into Scotland by easy stages, Longley," broke in Colonel Pell's voice. You'll join us? You and I will each do up our business and start off together."

"Of course he will join us," chimed in Mrs. Pell. "We will not allow him to say 'no'."

"Thank you both. He does not want to say 'no'," answered Ned. He spoke lightly as the occasion called for. But Colonel Pell's words, "We will start off together," brought him back with a shock to that terrible night when the two had started off together to the distant scene of the motor-car accident where his father lay dead, and his mother well-nigh dying.

With the memory his own position, for the moment forgotten, flashed before him. What right had he whose poverty and duty to his mother forbade him to open his lips to Dorothy and had even forced him to choke back the words he had begun to utter to her—what right had he to presume even by secret anger to stand between her and any other man? "Dog in the manger I shall not be," he said to himself with a strength of decision that brought him back to his present and the companion waiting for his answer.

Dorothy also as she listened to Dalkeith's conversation, now largely monologue, was watching Lady Griselda. "She did not dream there were Americans like Ned," she said to herself. "It's plain enough what she thinks of him. I hope though, he doesn't see it. It's not good for young men to be too much admired; it makes them vain. But is he never coming to tell me about the people at home, Grace and everybody? Yet he can't now; she is holding him."

It was not long, however, before he came to her with his budget of news. After these had been discussed, Dorothy asked him:

"Did you like my suggestions in regard to the play?" And as he assented eagerly, she turned to her other companion. "I told you about my trying to do something with the drama in collaboration, Lord Dalkeith," she said to him. "Mr. Longley is the one with whom I am collaborating."

"Ah, indeed!" answered the other in surprise. "I had supposed—" He checked himself.

"You had supposed it was an older and wiser head,

I've no doubt," Ned finished smilingly. " But we seem to get on together very comfortably."

That was exactly it, ran Dalkeith's thoughts. He had pictured the collaborator as somebody in the style of a workman, a hack. But this fellow! Why, he might be a prince from his bearing. And as to looks—Lord Dalkeith was a very different person from Charley Bridges. But upon one point they agreed—if either had to do with Dorothy Brooke in an important relation, her play-writing would be given up.

But as they all were merely on a summer holiday, what they all did was simply to go gayly onward to the Courts of Justice which they were to visit next, Priscy insisting that she must see an English judge in his red robes.

XII

REX TELLS THE NEWS

Dear Doro:

"Olive and Harry are already making preparations to celebrate your return. They're immensely secret about it; but, on my soul, I believe they are writing a play! Olive keeps a note-book *à la Dorothy,* and has a habit of dashing down notes spasmodically with great effect; she's nothing, if not effective, as you know. Really, it looks quite fine; but I could tell better if I saw what the notes were. Every now and then I come across her and Harry bending over them, and adopting an air of mystery whenever I appear. That air of mystery becomes our younger sister. You have a way, Doro, of doing a great deal as if it were little, and rather with a manner as if you ought to be ashamed not to do it than proud of its accomplishment. But here is where Olive outdoes you; the ado that your accomplishment makes, she begins with. Only time will show if it's much ado about nothing. But aside from projected performance, she is a dear little girl and really tries to make up to the *mater* for you—as if any human being could! But her efforts are received with the kindest appreciation, and I can see that the *mater* hopes her younger daughter will grow into the habit of thoughtfulness.

"When Harry tries to be attentive, he treats the *mater* like an old lady, which in these days when nobody is old is a little hard on a women in her forties; he pulls up the best chair for her, runs for a shawl, asks if she wouldn't like a footstool, and all kinds of absurdities, until I'm divided between desire to shake him, or to explode with laughter. I should never dare to do the last, however, for I should break the poor child's heart—and if I shook him, I might break his arm! So between the two risks, I take myself off until the circus is over.

"Your dear one—yes, our dear one, Doro, is *very* well this summer. Make your heart light on her account. The *pater* is fine, too. We all take no end of comfort in your letters and congratulate ourselves upon the good time you are having and the pictures on the walls of your memory that you are hanging in the best light, every day a new one, or, perhaps, several.

"Mamma went to see Mrs. Longley last week. I'm sure she will write you about her visit, if she's not done so already. That poor lady is a heroine, and I'm afraid a wreck, physically; but calm, cheerful, even gay at moments—well, I shall have to tell you how the *mater* put it. She said: 'Her joy is buried with her husband, her heart is with her children'—and, truly, Doro, they deserve it—'her faith is supreme; she does not talk it, but you feel it.' In spite of seeming impossibility, she does gain a little, but how little it seems to us who are well and strong. She has promised to visit us when she gets well—what she calls well.

" How delighted I am Longley has gone abroad. If ever a fellow needed a rest, he's the one. Now, when you meet him, as of course you will, don't go to screwing him up on your plays and things; let him do the playing himself. I'm down under the tree by the hammock—there! Do you see that scratch on the paper? That's Nemo, his mark; he's just come along and poked his great heavy head against my hand. But, poor fellow, he was anxious to send his love to you. Truly, Doro, he is peeping into the empty hammock, and then asking me with his eyes what has become of you? Don't be afraid lest you should not get a welcome when you come back to Brookehurst—he will give it to you!

" Harry's poultry is coming on finely. He has taken to heart the *pater's* assurance that if he undertook the business, he must carry it on for at least a year. He enjoys it; it divides his interest with Olive's schemes. He doesn't say so, but I see from his air of importance that he secretly believes he has the hen, if not the goose, that lays the golden eggs, and he will soon become a multi-millionaire out of eggs and pullets. This morning I heard him jingling his money in his pocket.

" Lulu has been devoted to her grandmother since her graduation—this does not refer to her grandmother's graduation although it seems to do so! Indeed, I sometimes wonder if the latter ever had one? But I'll not criticise, because she is to be my grandmother also some day and I shall adopt her, eccentricities and all. Of course, we are all more or less like the moon, having a dark side. But Mrs. Bromley keeps her bright side toward Lulu, and I'm content. I ought to be more; for

I've just returned from a delightful visit with the old lady. Lulu was heavenly to me; and to everybody else, in a different way. Being heavenly is her cut, you know. I never heard that being heavenly was a 'cut'. But what can you expect of a lover's rhapsodies? There was a lawn party given for charitable purposes during my visit. Lulu sang. Really, that *was* heavenly, Doro! You've not heard her sing for six months, and she has gained even in that time; she is studying music hard. I told her that if I could not make a living, she could, and we ought to be married immediately. But after all, she's right, and it is my wish also to get started in business first. To be sure, I have a good-sized nest egg from my kind Rex, Sr. But a nest egg is only an inspiration—which all amounts to the fact that if Lulu would say 'yes' to-day, I would be there! But I think that, for one thing, she has determined to give this year to her grandmother who has been so good to her. Next week my singing bird is coming here to make—mamma a visit. I venture to say Olive will consult her as to the plans on hand for your reception. But if she should, she'll tie up Lulu so that I can't hear them.

"I've heard that Norcross is going upon the stage. But whether it is so, or he is only trying to put his farces there, I can't tell. Father Time will kindly make it known. A few days ago I met your friend, Miss Hyde, on the street. It was about lunch time, and I invited her into a restaurant, and we had a good talk. It was she who told me about Norcross; but she was not sure herself as to his intentions. She told me

though, that he had been very helpful to her in preparing for an entertainment that she is planning to give this autumn. I never imagined unselfish interest in anybody a specialty of Norcross'. But I'm glad he is lending her a helping hand. And she is counting upon you and Priscy. I told her to keep on doing it. Really, Doro, she is growing handsomer. There is something about her I like. I'll own to you that she's an improvement on Dia. I suppose you've guessed that half my admiration for the latter was to tease you. I had my eye on Lulu all the time; I was only holding off to be able to judge where her eyes were.

"When you come home I'll tell you how I found out that Mrs. Harris had a good deal to do with Longley's going abroad. She is a good friend to—well, to everybody she likes. Now, how about this Dalkeith with a handle to his name? He's not all handle, is he? Or is he a fine fellow with the title thrown in? I've seldom heard the *pater* laugh as he did over the 'old gentleman' Buccleugh business! This phrase doesn't mean I've not an infinite respect for dukes—as great as any Yankee in the lot.

"All good and fine things to you, Doro. But if you manage to keep your head level and bring your heart home with you, one of the people who will not mourn over it is your good-for-nothing brother, Rex."

XIII

A FRIEND TO SEE GRACE LONGLEY

The first of June of that summer in which Dorothy went abroad Jimmy Reid came thoughtfully out of the bank in which he held a position of trust, and walked meditatively along the street of the city on the outskirts of which Mr. Longley and his family had lived. He was pondering a problem which he had been constantly studying ever since the accident which had cost that gentleman his life and plunged the family into grief and poverty. At that time Reid had been full of sympathy and helpfulness. For the relatives of Ned and Grace Longley, his former schoolmates, were at a distance and could render little or no service. Both brother and sister had deeply appreciated Reid's kindness.

Since the day that Grace had left her old home and returned to college, her sad, sweet face had been ever in his mind. In her sorrow and the calamity that had overtaken the family, his boyish admiration and friendship had deepened into love. Had she been in her old home as formerly, surrounded by luxuries that he could never hope to give her, these might have been a wall of defence to her from his avowal.

But now she was in another person's house doing service, not menial, to be sure, but, none the less,

service. She was not free; she was not her own mistress. Was it impossible that she would listen to him? That very day his salary had been raised, a fact that caused his wishes to spread wider wings. He could offer her only a simple home, to be sure, but a comfortable one. And in time he would be better off; he had received the hint, if not the pledge of this. Would Grace marry him? His heart beat fast with the joy of the very thought. He took the road that led to her old home. As he came into sight of it, he seemed to see Grace there once more. He believed that some day he could place her there again, and add ease, if not luxury to her comfort. He walked home in a dream of delight. From his own gate a great dog rushed forth to meet him. He stooped down and caressed the animal.

"Would you like to see her again, Leo, see your own dear mistress?" he asked softly.

The dog reading the light in the speaker's eyes, hearing the tenderness in his tones, uttered a joyous bark.

"Dear old fellow," said Jimmy patting the head of Grace's dog that he had taken to keep for her when her home was so suddenly broken up, and had petted to even Leo's content, "dear old fellow," he repeated, "you shall see her before long. And what should you say if we should have her with us always, Leo? Why should I wait longer?" he added to himself. "I'll get leave of absence this very week—yes, I will ask her."

"Miss Longley? She's out motoring with Mrs.

Bridges, sir," returned the man who had answered the bell. "No, sir, I don't know when they will come home," he added in reply to the stranger's further question.

"Can you find out what part of the day she will be at home?" asked Reid. "I have come from a distance, and it is important that I should see her."

He stood looking about him while the man went to inquire. The place was quite magnificent; but to the stranger it had not the beauty of the Longley home endeared to the owners by the generations of Longleys who had lived there, and full of the refinement and charm of the recent inmates.

"Mrs. Bridges always rests after luncheon, the lady's maid says," announced the footman returning. "And she says probably Miss Longley will be in then, too."

"Be sure to give her this," said Reid handing his card on which he had penciled that he would return at three o'clock. But as he turned and walked down the steps, at the foot of them he came face to face with a young man short in stature and plain in face, but with a very pleasant expression and an air of proprietorship.

"What's wanted?" he asked as the two men stared at one another.

"Miss Longley is wanted," returned Jimmy Reid, a little stiffly.

The other surveyed him keenly for an instant. "Ah, yes, I see," he said.

Jimmy flushed from the sudden conviction that he

did see. And then the other saw all the better. He frowned slightly. But the next moment he was smiling in great good humor.

"I'm an old friend of hers and of Ned Longley's," added Reid.

"Ah, yes, yes, I see," repeated the other. "You're welcome, like all Miss Longley's friends. We appreciate her, and her brother, too," he said holding out his hand to Jimmy who took it with a reluctance which the speaker either failed to perceive, or ignored. "You will see her soon, I feel quite sure," he went on. "My mother is going out this evening and I think she will be home to luncheon to-day, and that's not far off. Don't take that tiresome electric into the city, and then have to take it out again and tramp that half mile. Wait for her here."

"Thank you very much," said the visitor. "I will wait if you think she will return so soon." And he looked about him.

"Yes, we think we have a tidy bit of a place here," answered Charley Bridges as the stranger expressed his admiration of the sweep of lawn and the great old trees that had never been put there by the present owners, whatever might have been the case as to the house. "And we have a fine view here," went on Bridges taking Reid to a rise of ground from which there spread out before them a wide and beautiful prospect of hills and water, and the city a few miles distant. "My father is a great business man," explained his son; "and here with an auto, he is close by his office, so to speak. Of course, we are in town

in winter. You are an old friend of the Longleys, then?" he asked the next moment. "They're having a rough time of it just now. Mighty plucky, though. We all think the world of them both. He was watching Jimmy as he spoke, and he saw him wince, which amused him, and he proceeded to expatiate upon their admirable qualities. "Why," he said at last interrupting himself, "you must be the fellow who did so much for them at the time Mr. Longley was killed?"

"What I could do was very little to meet such distress," answered Reid.

"They didn't hold it so," said Bridges. "I'm sure Miss Longley will be very glad to see you—to thank you again. Ah, there's the honk of the auto! Here they are."

As Jimmy awaited the appearance of the motor-car thus announced from a distance, he was not pleased by Bridges' assurance as to the reception Grace would give him. "What does he know about it, anyway?" he thought hotly. "What business of his is it?" He wanted no patronage from these people, however purse-proud they might be.

But Charley Bridges was not purse-proud. He himself was not quite at ease, any more than was the visitor. Both watched with interest the approach of Miss Longley.

Grace's surprised greeting was touched with the emotion recalled by the scene in which she had last met Reid after her father's death. She inquired after her friends and the unforgotten Leo, while Charley was

helping his mother from the car. Then she presented Jimmy to her.

"Always happy to see any of Miss Longley's friends," Mrs. Bridges assured him as she shook hands. "I always know they'll be the right kind. And now walk in and have lunch with us. Then you two can have your chat afterwards— Oh, yes, you must come," she insisted as he excused himself. "Lunch will be on the table in five minutes; and then Miss Longley always has an hour or more to herself." But he would still have refused, if Grace had not added her request, while Bridges laying a hand on his arm, led him up the steps again.

"You won't mind 'pot luck', I know," he said.

The "pot luck", as Bridges had called whatever there might chance to be forthcoming, was fit for an epicure. And Reid would have enjoyed himself but for the patronage of Mrs. Bridges and the quizzical expression into which the face of her son constantly relapsed as in the intervals of his talk, he watched the guest, or sat with lowered eyelids seemingly devoted to the contents of his plate. As they rose from the table, he approached Grace.

"Please tell your friend, Miss Longley," he said in an undertone, "that I'm going to motor into town this afternoon, and any time when he wishes to go I shall be pleased to take him in, to save him the tedious electrics and give him so much more time with you, if he has to meet a train."

"Thank you, Mr. Bridges; you are very kind," she answered. "I'll tell him."

"I hope you'll always think me so when I do myself a pleasure," he laughed as he disappeared.

Then Jimmy sat with Grace in the shady corner of the great veranda, and told her all the news from home; and among other things, how Mrs. White had not been quite strong that spring, but was better now; and how devoted to her Mabel had been.

"Mabel is a dear girl, and I always knew it," said Grace warmly. For the other had heard the story of her treatment of Grace and Ned and Dorothy in the jealous fear that she was being left out of the affections of her old friends. Not a whisper of the facts had reached him from any of these. It was Mabel herself who had told him the story as, in her contrition, she had wept over the terrible calamity which had befallen these friends she loved. "That I should have taken any joy out of their lives, Jimmy!" she had mourned.

"Just what I should have expected of her!" returned Grace her face aglow when he had told her this incident. And Jimmy as he listened, believed that this lovely girl who always thought the best of people was, after all, nearer right in her estimates than the censorious. There was more good in the world than these latter allowed.

They talked of what Ned had done, of his abilities and his prospects; and long before he was ready, the time came when Reid must go. Bridges whirled him into the city and chatted pleasantly as they went on. Reid caught his train with two minutes to spare and the other did not desert him until he was on board.

Then he drove to the office of the elder Bridges, and found that gentleman in his private room.

"Well, dad," he began, "the best-laid plans of mice and men——"

"Don't quote Shakespeare to me!" exclaimed his father with more irritation than usual to his equable disposition, but due to the thermometer being in the nineties, and a certain business matter bothering him.

"That happens to be Burns," returned the son.

"What's the odds? Skip your quotings and give it to me straight. You've got something to tell me. Out with it."

"You weren't home to luncheon," began Charley. "Took your customer out to get him into humor, I'll be bound; too many hundred thousands in the balance to let him get cranky. Well, we had company at our house; a young fellow with red hair and a good, bright face. He'd come and was just going away again when I appeared on the scene, and asked him what he wanted? He said rather snappily that he wanted Miss Longley. And the instant he said it, and from the tone he said it in, I knew he meant it in the most literal way. Yes, I've caught on. He wants to marry Miss Longley."

The face of Bridges, Sr. fell. "Well, I hope you let him go doublequick," he snapped.

The other laughed; but his voice was not pleased either. "We can't keep Miss Longley shut up in a round tower, dad," he answered. "This means the end of our halcyon days at home; they've seemed too good to last. But we shall have to stand what comes."

At the palpable regret in his tones, his father wheeled about and gave him a keen glance. Then he turned back again and devoted himself once more to the figures on his desk.

"And is she going to marry him?" he asked finally.

"I've not interviewed her yet," laughed his son.

At that answer the elder Bridges opened his lips, and suddenly closed them again with a snap; for he had to shut them hard not to utter a piece of advice that seemed to him most desirable, and much needed. But he remembered in time how that same advice had been received once before, and he was too shrewd a business man to repeat himself.

"If we lose her, we shall have to find her match," he said with all the indifference of manner he could summon.

"Can't be done!" retorted Charley. "For the work she is doing, she is matchless." The eyes of the elder man brightened; but he kept them upon his figures, although at the moment he had a vision of something much more graceful, and even desirable, than the highest sums these stood for. "We'll have to do the best we can, of course," pursued his son. "But she may not have accepted him yet. He may not have asked her yet."

"No?" questioned the other. "Not when he had a chance? He can't be very bright, then."

Silence.

"Look here, Charley. What do you advise in this matter Rogers suggests?"

They began to discuss the affair which had been occupying the father when the younger man came in. It seemed as if the vexation had gone out of the elder's mood. Even the prospect of the loss of the little girl, as he sometimes called Grace of whom he thought so highly, seemed to lose its sting.

Jimmy Reid rode home with a sense of bewilderment. Grace had been deeply interested in all that concerned himself as well as in her other friends at her old home; she had been very kind, very cordial. Why, then had he not carried out the full purpose that had taken him to her? Why had he not asked her to marry him? How could there be need of delay for longer acquaintance, since they had been friends from childhood?

Yet he recalled that in the past he had never appealed to her as a suitor; and so to make his present purpose clear to her there needed to be a little more time and definiteness. He told himself that this was why he had not spoken out his heart that day; that this was all. Yet in his heart of hearts he was not sure of it. If anything else blocked him, however, he did not know what it was. It was true that he had found her rather a petted friend than a snubbed attendant. But for all that, he did not like Mrs. Bridges. She had questioned him closely as to the details of Mr. Longley's death and other matters which he was sure did not concern her, and had not at first accepted her son's broad hints to turn the conversation. That kind of inquisition must be hard for Grace, for she was sensitive. She did not mind it though, or what was

more likely, she accepted it as a part of the business—a very hard business it seemed to Jimmy.

And he did not like that Bridges fellow, for all his politeness. He had too much the air of sizing up things, Jimmy told himself; and that was far from polite.

But at his next visit to Grace which would be soon, the suitor promised himself to tell her of the love he had cherished for her so long, and ask her to marry him. She had been his friend from childhood, why should she not say "yes"? Yet the question was so momentous, he was further from being sure of her answer than before he had come. But he argued with himself that this must be the way that fellows always felt.

Not once, but several times more did Reid come to see Grace Longley. For at every visit, although she was never less kind, he felt more uncertain, not of her friendship, but of any deeper feeling. He liked Charley Bridges less and less. He said to himself hotly that the fellow put on airs, considered himself superior. In a sense this was not true, although Bridges became more strongly convinced of what he had perceived immediately, that Reid was hardly up to Miss Longley's mark. But, surely, that was her affair, not Charley Bridges' who laid no claim to her interest beyond that of courtesy. He did his best to check his mother's teasings and insinuations, and by the effort won Grace's gratitude.

As Mr. Bridges, Sr. saw day after day go by, and

learned of visit after visit from that fellow whom once or twice he had met, and found that Charley kept hands off with a nonchalance that was most aggravating, he had many dark moods. His son commented silently that he had never known dad grouchy before.

When at last the inevitable came, and Jimmy forced Grace to tell him the thing that she had tried so hard to have him understand without her saying it, that she was always his dear friend, but not his lover, and could not marry him, then in his bitterness he said something which it made him hot with shame to think of afterward. For, true or not, he had no right to say it, and he knew that.

"That Bridges fellow has the inside track with you, Grace!" he cried.

"Jimmy Reid!" she retorted indignantly. "But you are not yourself, or you would not speak so to me. You cannot know," she added more gently; "but it has been told me and I am quite sure of it, that Mr. Bridges loves a very beautiful girl. I don't know it from her, for she would never speak. I do not think she will ever marry him. But how could he even think of anybody else when he cares for such a girl? Why, he would laugh if he heard the suggestion, as I would if you had not distressed me so. Is it possible you can't tell the difference between courtesy and interest?"

Charley Bridges did hear him, and Grace's answer, both most unintentionally. He was coming around the corner of the house and did not know they were so near him, and even then would not have heard,

had not their voices been unconsciously raised in their earnestness. He wheeled about out of hearing directly. Fortunately, he had not come into sight.

"Little brick!" he said to himself. "I'm glad she is sending that fellow off; he's not good enough for her. Then, what should we do with mamma? And besides, she's a mighty pleasant little thing to have around. The whole business is amusing. I must tell dad."

But he was not amused. Again he saved Grace as much as he could from Mrs. Bridges' curiosity and insinuations.

"You're dying to know if she has refused him," he said to his mother one day. "But you don't expect her to tell you, do you? She's not that kind. One thing more," he added, and he said it very emphatically: "I do wish you would stop that everlasting, silly talk about 'the girl that gets Charley'. You don't think she would get much of a bargain, do you? I'm no 'catch', for all my money."

XIV

A GLIMPSE INTO DOROTHY'S NOTE-BOOK

"DOROTHY'S Note-Book—but neither song nor sermon."

"We met an amusing man at Ambleside. Among many good things, he said of Grasmere that if Wordsworth should come back, he would recognize the place readily; for there had not been half a dozen new houses built in it since his death."

"It is so funny to hear people here say: 'Oh, we like such and such a thing; we want it always to be so, because it always has been so.'"

"In the Lake district the people love their tearful climate. They say a day of rain is worth twenty fine weather days in bringing out the beauty of the mountains."

"These people are so fond of flowers; in London the windows and balconies are beautiful with plants in bloom."

"I cannot get used to seeing men come into restaurants and sit there with their hats on. As it is the custom of the country, of course it is not a rudeness. But I'm glad it is not our custom."

"If there ever is a country where class distinctions

come out strongly, it is here, when one compares the refined courtesy of the English gentleman with the unmannerliness of the men everywhere, on the top of the omnibusses where they, in front, sit with their pipes or cigars and bestow the smoke of them upon the passengers behind. When we went one day in one of the Thames' boats, to see what it was like, we had to stand all the way; not a man offered us a seat. I need not say Mrs. Pell did not make one of our party on such a jaunt. But worst of all, it makes me indignant over every other indignation to see on the London streets a woman walking along weighed down with her baby and her big bundle, and by her side her lord and master strutting proudly on smoking his pipe and empty-handed!"

"I am so glad to have heard the beautiful service at Westminster Abbey, the fine music, the intoning, reading, responses, but no sermon. As I listened, I wondered if the souls of the illustrious dead could hear? But I did not say this to anybody; I only wrote it to mother. She understands all my questionings. She never reproves me, or laughs at me. But sometimes in looking back, I think that she has guided me unconsciously to myself."

"One day I heard in a London yard a child's sweet voice singing, 'Old Folks at Home'—'Away down on the Suwanee River.'"

"Whatever else the English may be, they certainly

are not water drinkers. An American told me that one day in her boarding house she asked for a drink of water. The maid answered that the water in her room was drinking water. 'Is it fresh?' questioned the lady. 'Oh, yes,' returned the maid, 'it is fresh; it was put there this morning.' It was then seven o'clock in the evening!

"But Mrs. Elton's story about ice water is even funnier. Her maid, she said, would put a small piece of ice into a pitcher in the refrigerator and leave it standing there all day, then at dinner this pitcher would be brought to the table. 'This is not ice water,' Mrs. Elton would say to her. But she would insist that it was; she had put in the ice herself in the morning! At a restaurant one never gets a glass of water without asking especially for it."

"At Kenilworth we saw the tower in the Norman keep where Robert Bruce is said to have been kept a prisoner. It was perfectly dark, and he was let down into it. I also heard that at one time Edward II was kept a prisoner in the same tower, by command of the queen and Mortimer. When I come to those old dungeons, or the remnants of them, I peer down and shudder. It is one of our evidences of progress that we don't treat prisoners so any more."

"Many things in the Tower of London that I wanted to see are not shown. But we did see the wonderful decorations in the Armory. All the work is done with weapons, or different parts of weapons—

a water spout; a spider and its web; an enormous passion flower; the star of the star and garter made by swords and bayonets; the Scotch thistle where the swords are bent like feathers around a centre and under this flower is the motto in Latin, 'No one touches me with impunity.' Truly, no one could! As I said, everything is made of weapons, or parts of weapons. One decoration was of corn; another of a bird pursuing a butterfly. And then, the rooms were filled with armor and weapons."

"Lord Dalkeith is very wideawake and full of Scotch canniness; but through all his politeness and deference to our wishes, I can see that he is very fond of his own way. So are all of us who amount to anything! He and Lord Hervey are helping out the trip in many ways; they're the best of *ciceroni,* and they have so many interesting touches of fact or legend that hired guides don't know at all, and a good many, too, that Colonel Pell is delighted to hear. Lord Hervey is, if possible, more taken with Pell-Mell than ever."

"I really do want to see the duke again; he is so kind, and such fun, too. And Mrs. Pell always lets me do exactly what he asks me. I enjoy the situation. I think that in his sub-conscious mind Colonel Pell does."

"I must remember to tell at home of one Englishman who filled me with genuine admiration. To be

sure, he did only what he should have done; but isn't that a good deal? Colonel Pell had been down to an office in Piccadilly buying tickets for our excursion through the north of England and into Scotland. He is so accustomed to through routes, as we all are at home, that he never could endure stopping at every ticket window we came to. He bought the whole route, with a few unimportant exceptions, at one fell swoop, and thought, too, that he had made a good bargain. But that very afternoon up came a messenger boy to our hotel. 'What's wrong now, I wonder?' said Colonel Pell with a small frown on his brow as he opened the note. Out dropped a gold piece. He was too busy reading his note to stop to pick it up; and the boy handed it to him. He scribbled a note and handed it to the messenger with his thanks and a tip to the little fellow. Then he turned to us when the boy had gone. 'What do you suppose that clerk has done?' he cried. 'He has sent me back a guinea. In going over the account again, he found that he had overcharged me to that extent!' He has marked the guinea and given it to Pell-Mell for a mascot."

"I try to remember Rex's injunction not to bother Ned about stories and plays this summer when he needs rest, although we have to talk things over a little. But Lady Griselda seems to have taken to consulting him about her plans. Poor Ned! She doesn't know what a hospital means to him. But Lady Griselda will find something to talk to him about."

Dorothy's note-book held many more notes and suggestions to be written out later, possibly, to figure in plots for story, or play. There were many bits of fun for the family and friends at home. And grave thoughts, too, for her own use in days to come.

XV

GRACE RECEIVES A LETTER FROM ABROAD

"DEAR GRACE;" wrote Dorothy, "I wish I could describe to you the driveway as you enter the grounds of Warwick Castle—although you don't drive but walk through this way. The road is cut between two high walls of solid rock, so that you have to crane your neck to look up at the sky. But these walls which one would think forbidding are made wonderfully beautiful by vines that creep to the very top, cover every projection of the rocks, and here and there wave out their little banners of welcome. It is so quiet there, so sheltered, that a feeling of solemnity comes over you as you walk along this road from which you can see nothing but the sky, which the day we were there was beautifully blue. You saunter on and on, until by a sudden turn and ascent you come into view of the castle. The building is very fine and imposing and the grounds are magnificent. In the castle you are permitted to see a fine suite of rooms and superb pictures and furnishings. But, Grace, we met with a disappointment at the very outset. Cæsar's tower was closed to visitors. There it stands at the very gateway, to me the most interesting of the whole place, an old tower of defence. The man in charge said it had been closed because visitors had hacked the stone walls, chipping off mementos. I hope that was not the

reason, and if it was, that those barbarous visitors were not Americans."

There followed a more minute description of the castle, and the town, said to have been a British settlement taken possession of by the Romans, and full of quaintness, of the old church, and Guy's Cliffe. Then Dorothy went on to say that Lady Griselda had joined their party into the north. It was fine to have her with them, but the writer wished she were a little more interested in sight seeing.

"We went to Kenilworth yesterday," wrote Dorothy. "It requires a good deal of imagination to build up that splendid castle out of the sad ruin one finds, but Scott's imagination has done it. Everywhere here we find the touch of his magic, and when we come into Scotland the land will be alive with it.

"You can understand how good it is to have Ned with us; he so thoroughly enjoys everything; and he knows a great deal for a young fellow. Colonel Pell thinks so too. And it was right he should have been here to-day of all days; for we've been at Shakespeare's home and haunts the whole day long, and are spending the night here in Stratford on Avon; I am writing you from one of the hotels. To-morrow we are going to the forest of Arden—and that only means some of the woods which used to be great woods about Warwickshire. If only we could find the trees on which Orlando pinned the verses to Rosalind! Or some of the other wonderful things that happened in Arden, the great, wild woods!

"But we've had a fine day. First we visited Anne

Hathaway's cottage, and were shown the settle on which the two sat when the poet was wooing her. I told Ned I'd have said 'yes' very soon, if I had been obliged to sit on that hard seat to be wooed. He was just going to answer something saucy when Lady Griselda strolled up.

"When we went into the house where Shakespeare was born, a feeling of solemnity came over me, I wanted to be silent. But, oh, Grace, you never heard such a voice—it was strident—and such a volley of words as the woman hired to show the house opened upon us. She explained what everybody knew and things we didn't care to know, and rubbed them in until our tympanums ached. 'Can't you stop her?' cried Mrs. Pell. I should think the face she turned upon the woman would have ended the tirade; but it didn't. Colonel Pell managed it, though. He slipped a tip into her hand, and said that it was for her silence; but if she would rather talk, give it back to him! From that time she only answered our questions and ignored the other visitors while we were in the room. We did not stay long. We liked better the old church where the poet worshiped and where there were so many inscriptions and other things of interest.

"We went down to the bank of the Avon and sat on the bench where Longfellow is said to have composed his poem. And we went over the theatre built in memorial of the great poet. We went to the old schoolhouse where he is said to have gone to school—it doesn't seem as if he had ever needed it. You see, Grace, Ned and I have not joined the company of

critics who say there never was a poet and dramatist, Shakespeare. We say if Bacon could have written like Shakespeare, why did he ever write like Bacon? And as we agree, we soon decided it.

"I remember we were saying this when we were standing together, just we two in the yard of the house where it is said Shakespeare had once lived—not his birthplace—and the pretty young girl, who showed us about brought us tumblers, and we drank from the ivy-covered old well there, drank inspiration, I said to him, and he was cruel enough to retort he hoped we weren't drinking frogs! The young girl allowed us to pick some flowers, we wanted to do it for ourselves. Ned must have given her a big tip, she looked so happy over it. We two happened to be by ourselves for a few minutes, two collaborators studying at the shrine of our art. We enjoyed it. But as we were thinking how good it was to look at the places that Shakespeare had lived in, and admire him together, without discussion of any kind, but only to feel the greatness of the poet and be privileged to see what he had known, Ned said to me suddenly:

"'There's Lady Griselda coming down upon us. Which way shall we go?'

"'Why do you want to go at all?' I asked teasingly.

"'Oh, if you want to put Shakespeare into a hospital, all right,' he retorted.

"'I don't,' I laughed; and looked about me.

"'You can get into the next street this way,' said the young girl who seemed interested in the situation.

And she led us through the yard and behind the house and into a little footpath, and showed us an opening in the fence into a lane. When Ned went up to her as she was turning away, he said,

"'If the lady coming along the street comes to you, it will not be necessary to say which way we are going.'

"'I don't know which way ye're going,' she said. I think Ned had given her another tip, for she shut her hand on something. 'But if ye want to go up the street, ye'll find it a bit ahead of ye.' And she ran off laughing.

"Ned and I did the same. When in a few minutes we joined the others, Colonel Pell said we should not wander about in such a vast city as Stratford, and get lost. Lord Hervey who was telling the interesting points to Priscy, or telling her something interesting, looked at us as if he would have laughed if he'd not been polite; and Lady Griselda said we had missed quite important bits of information in missing her. Lord Dalkeith was not with us at that time; he expects to join us again, probably in the Lake country. I know all that I tell you of Ned will be delightful to you, Graciosa."

There was much more of places and persons in Dorothy's letter. In fact, it interested the recipient so much that, this being one of Mrs. Bridges' depressed days, as she called it—Charley said it should be called one of other people's "oppressed" days, Grace in a desire to entertain her, read aloud the letter to her.

Mrs. Bridges was so much entertained that she came out of her mood.

"Miss Brooke says she mustn't say she wants you, Miss Longley," she quoted, a sentence that Grace had inadvertently failed to skip. "Now, why shouldn't she have you? I believe she should. Let me see. Let me think it over."

Grace was perplexed. Mrs. Bridges was certainly not offended. She certainly was not going to discharge her companion. Was she really going to send her off for a holiday? How delightful! But, no; Grace could not go. She would never go. There was her mother.

There was nothing to do but wait for developments. These came.

XVI

MRS. BRIDGES DECIDES TO TRAVEL

"I'm going to take Miss Longley abroad this summer," announced Mrs. Bridges that same evening.

Grace looked at her in amazement. Charley Bridges cried: "Why, of course not! It's too late to plan such a thing." But the elder Bridges after a meditative pause, began to laugh.

"I've been all over it with care," persisted Mrs. Bridges; "and it's the only thing to do. Pray, how long does it take me to plan things, Charley? I have many faults; but, at least, I'm up-to-date."

Her husband paused still longer before answering. It would not do to allow her to perceive that he considered the idea excellent. She liked to believe herself capable of beating against wind and tide. If the victory were too easy, the fruit of it might be relinquished. So, he added nothing to his laugh until she turned to him with, "Well, what do you say, Mr. Bridges?"

"What I say doesn't count," he answered meekly.

"Well, to be sure, my own judgment is sufficient. But, of course, it's nice to have you coincide with it."

"At least, I'll coincide, as you call it, with your determination," he said; and he returned to his paper.

"Do leave politics alone for five minutes," she cried, "and listen to me. We will take the next steamer——"

"On which you can get passage," interposed her son.

"Do I have to say I won't go without getting passage?" she cried. "Do you expect us to trail on behind at the end of a rope? You wouldn't like that either."

"I? What have I to do with it?"

"I should say you had a good deal, as you're going with us."

"I! I see myself! No, thank you, mamma."

"Of course, you will. Do you think it the thing for Miss Longley and me to go alone when there are two men in the family to take care of us? I see myself, too!"

"Then take dad. A vacation will do him no end of good. He works too hard."

Again the elder man laughed. "I couldn't work harder than I'd do trying to behave so as to suit the marm, Charley," he returned. "You'll have to leave me out of it."

"Then I don't know how you'll settle it," answered the son; "for you'll have to leave me out of it, too." He had no wish to encounter Dorothy and the haughty Mrs. Pell who, although she had been friendly enough to himself, had frozen his mother that summer at Mount Rest. "I've too many things on hand this summer," he added. "What makes you think of going at all, at this late day?"

"Late, indeed! It's in fine season."

Bridges, Sr. inwardly chuckled. This was exactly the stimulus of opposition that his wife required.

There were reasons why he hoped that she would carry out her scheme precisely as she had planned it. But Grace listened in dismay. In themselves a few weeks of travel would be delightful, even with the drawback of Mrs. Bridges' companionship. But it was impossible.

"I don't see how I can go, Mrs. Bridges, while Ned is away," she said. "Our mother is not well enough to have us both leave her."

"If I go abroad this summer, my companion accompanies me, Miss Longley," returned Mrs. Bridges in the manner of the employer to the employed.

Grace sat silent, looking down, unseen tears in her eyes, a lump in her throat. She must not resign her place. The money she received was of the greatest importance to her mother.

"I'll look after your mother while you're gone, Miss Longley," said the young man sympathetically.

"Thank you, Mr. Bridges," she answered him.

"Indeed, you'll do no such thing, Charley Bridges," retorted his mother. "For you'll be with us. You think you'll keep me at home by behaving so. But let me tell you, you won't. I'm going anyway; and I shall go off mad. And I'll vent all my spite on poor Miss Longley that you've been trying to defend from my cruelty ever since she came, threatening me, and what not.

Grace looked up suddenly, her face flushed. Had Mr. Bridges defended her so uniformly as this? She had known only of certain instances where he had

stood between her and his mother; but these had seemed to her incidental. Yet had they been premeditated? Was he keeping his promise to Dorothy to look out for her friend? She said no more. She must keep her place; and to do it, she must go abroad with Mrs. Bridges. Mrs. White and Mrs. Brooke would watch over her mother, she knew. If it actually came to her sailing, and she believed it would, she would ask them.

Mrs. Bridges had indeed settled even details in her own mind.

"I can get along with three new gowns until I get over there," she announced. "And Miss Longley, I'm going to give you a present of a lovely new suit. You needn't shake your head and say, 'please not;' for I'm going to do it. I sha'n't let you choose it; for you'll be getting a cheap affair to save my money, and I intend you to have something 'chic.' Suddenly, she stopped talking for an instant and looked at the girl. "Perhaps you don't want to go so far away from Mr. Reid, Miss Longley? I forgot him."

"Mrs. Bridges," returned Grace, "I have told you the only reason why I should not be glad to go abroad—my mother."

"Well, don't freeze me with your icy tones, my dear," responded the lady. "Of course you wouldn't confess it—and I'm not saying it's so. No, indeed, I hope not. But girls will be girls. However, here's another thing, Mr. Bridges." And she turned to her husband.

The following morning as the two men sat in the

office ostensibly busy with affairs, the elder Bridges turned to his son.

"If you'll only hold out, Charley, and in some way keep the marm at home," he said, "you may give the red-headed feller another chance. He may come back again, you see; and she may take him after all. He wants her bad enough. What do you think of it? Why not do it?"

"If mamma insists upon going," said the other after a pause, "I suppose I'd better go with her, dad, especially if she is going to run into those people over there now. I can keep her from some absurdities perhaps, even if she vent them upon me instead of anybody else."

"Well, if she will go, I'd be glad to have you on that account, Charley, to be sure. I should feel better. And then, it would be no end of better for the little girl. I don't know if she'd be able to steer the marm and the journey at the same time. I don't exactly know how they'd come out. So, if she insists upon it, I say, I'd feel easier to have you go along. Think it over, Charley."

"I will, dad," returned his son. "I don't believe we should either of us be quite comfortable to have mamma go without one of us. And of course it would make it better for Miss Longley."

"Oh, yes, better for the marm, and for the little girl, much better," answered the elder man in the tone of ending the discussion. At the moment of speaking, however, he turned away to his safe with papers, and his son did not catch the twinkle in his eye. "Yes,

much better for the little girl," he repeated as he deposited his papers. Then coming back, he began to speak of the business of the day.

After all, thought the son, he must meet Dorothy sometime and begin to make up his mind to her being out of his reach. Perhaps now was as good as any other time. It would always be hard.

"I always know how to manage the men," Mrs. Bridges confided later to Grace. "They're perfectly devoted to me, and so afraid I shall find it out." And she laughed. "And, now, my dear, Charley has telephoned to secure passage for us three; he is going too. Oh, I see you're relieved. Well, I am, too; but I won't tell him so. It really wouldn't be much fun to go jigging over Europe, or whatever part of it we may go to, alone. But I wasn't going to flinch. Let me tell you a secret, Miss Longley. If you don't give in to your husband, when you have one—I hope it's not going to be Mr. Reid with the red hair—your husband will give in to you every time, mind. You will dominate. But I don't know whether you'd care about it; you're so gentle."

"I think there's time enough to consider that matter," smiled Grace. "What can I do now to help you?"

When the time for sailing was set, Mr. Bridges insisted that the little girl should run up and spend a day or two with her mother. His wife consented, although she said it was most inconvenient to miss her at that time.

"Tell your mother I'll keep her posted about you while you're away," he said to Grace, "and do anything else I can for her. What shall we do if the marm takes one of her tantrums while you're off duty?" he asked as he was taking her to the train. And the girl smiled back into the kind eyes that twinkled merrily at her. When she had gone, he looked after the train thoughtfully a moment. Then he laughed. "A good move of the marm's," he said to himself; "yes, a fine move. I hope what Charley said about mice and men won't turn out so this time."

"Oh, mamma, I hate so to leave you!" cried Grace Longley with a sob as she sat with her hand resting on her mother's and gazed into the pallid face, with its eyes clear as an angel's, it seemed to the girl, and its smile of heavenly sweetness.

"Now, I'm very glad to have you go, Grace dear. Perhaps I should not be if you were glad. But it is beautiful to me to think that you will be having all kinds of pleasant things while you are working for me."

"You always have such a way of putting things, mamma."

"Isn't that the true one? You would stay with me if you could, wouldn't you?"

"You know it."

"I do; and I'm glad you cannot for a few weeks, perhaps months. All the time you are away I shall be growing better; and when you see me again, I shall be so robust you'll not know me."

Grace turned her eyes from the fragile face, lest they should express too plainly her fears. But her mother read her.

"I intend to get well, Grace," she went on; "because I believe God intends to have me; not as strong as in the old days perhaps, but well, for your sake and Ned's. Poor Ned! I am not going to spoil his life—nor yours." She paused, and it seemed to her daughter as if the light in her mother's face had for an instant a warmth in it, as if vitality hovered within call of one who fought for it so valiantly. "Of course, you will meet Ned," she said; "and probably you will both see our lovely Dorothy. Poor Ned!" she said once more. "That will be a dangerous joy to him. But he has his father's own courage, brave boy." Her face clouded, and for a little time she sat silent and mournful. Then the brightness returned. "But I am sure it will come out all right; I shall not spoil your lives, you faithful children," she repeated.

"Oh, mamma, how can you say that?" And Grace broke into a sob. "You know it is our joy to do everything we can for you. The hard part of it is that we can do so little."

Mrs. Longley's arm stole about her daughter, and for a time both were silent looking upon, and yet perhaps not seeing the sweep of lawn sloping down to the little stream, a silver thread in the summer heat, a mimic raging torrent in the spring freshets. In the great comfortable old house on the veranda of which the two were sitting, Mrs. Longley was the only boarder, except the nurse who waited upon her, and

who now appeared with the dainty lunch which the physician had ordered for his patient, and of which she partook so sparingly. When this diversion was over and the nurse had retired, Mrs. Longley said abruptly:

"Grace, I am sure your father did not die the poor man he seems to have been. He would have told me if it had been so." Grace did not answer. She was remembering what Mrs. Longley did not know that when he was taken to the hospital after the accident there were papers found upon him so massed and saturated with his blood that they could not be read and were thrown away in the excitement and bewilderment of the time. "But what does it matter now to be troubled about it if it is lost? I care only for you two."

"Oh, if only I could be with you all the time, mamma!"

"I dare say it is better for me you cannot—more bracing; and it is certainly better for you. But we will be happy while we are together. I have you all to-day and the greater part of to-morrow—what wealth! And things will come out right somehow, Grace. I am sure of it."

But when, later in the day Mrs. Longley's nurse and Grace had practically to carry her to her room, it did not seem to the latter as if things ever could be right again.

Within the week Mrs. Bridges with her son and her companion stood on the deck of the outbound steamer. The former and Mrs. Bridges' maid had taken from

the lady every responsibility of luggage except her anxiety about it. Then when she had inquired for everything two or three times over, as she was wont to do, she turned to Grace.

"And you remembered not to write to your brother, or Miss Brooke, or anybody about our coming, Miss Longley?" It was at least the fourth time that she had made this inquiry, and each time she had added, as she did then, "It's to be a complete surprise, you know."

"But England and Scotland are somewhat bigger than your drawing-room, mamma. You seem to forget we may not meet them at all."

"Um!" snorted Mrs. Bridges giving her head a toss which assured her son that she had forgotten some incidents of the summer at Mount Rest, or had determined to ignore them. Behind her back he smiled across at Miss Longley.

But the latter was busy waching the stay-at-homes off the steamer.

"Does she wish she were among them?" he wondered. "Little brick! Loyal little brick she is!"

XVII

DOROTHY WRITES HOME

"Oh, may I?" cried Dorothy her voice hushed with excitement. "May I sit down in the very chair that he sat in and wrote his wonderful stories? Oh, thank you!" she said as the guide unhooked the bar that blocked the seat from the generality of sight seers, and she sank into the chair in which Scott whom from her childhood she had read and loved, had rushed his magic pen over the paper which had lain on the very table before her.

She sat silent; her downcast eyes were full of tears of an emotion she had no wish to utter. The others in the study of Abbotsford were watching her, all with curiosity, some with amusement, one with an emotion as deep as her own. Ned stood by the fireplace where in the great logs blazing before Scott as he wrote must have arisen to this mighty wizard of the North many a scene which his fancy had transferred to the pages under his hand, and so given to the wondering and delighted world. But much as Ned Longley admired and appreciated the great writer, his thoughts at the moment were with the lesser one. In another moment Dorothy would turn for sympathy in her emotion, sympathy felt, yet unuttered, for she would prefer it so. To whom would she turn? It was no conceit, but only the enthusiasms they had

shared and the work they had done together which led him to believe that she would look first at himself.

But at the instant Lord Dalkeith unconsciously stepped directly between the two, and Dorothy's lifted eyes met his, and not Ned's. Was it accident? Or had she known who was in the range of her upward glance? Was the appeal meant for the Scotsman, or had it been intended for Ned himself? There was no surprise in Dorothy's gaze, yet her expression changed at once to meet the smile on Lord Dalkeith's face.

"Your enthusiasm is delightful," he said to her with admiration in his tone, yet an admiration not for Scott, but for herself. "We are proud down to our finger-tips of the great man," he went on. "But we are used to it."

Dorothy rose slowly from the chair, feeling that she had been robbed of something. When after a minute she glanced at Ned, he was talking animatedly with Lady Griselda who had drawn his attention to the old armor in the study.

"That is where the clever fellow used to hide from unwelcome visitors," said Colonel Pell pointing to a small door that led from a gallery above their heads, and running partially around the room.

"Yes," chimed in Lord Hervey; "when people expected to find him here, he was not here at all, and nobody could—or would—tell where he was."

"You see, it was almost as good a hiding-place as he gave some of his characters," laughed Dalkeith.

"Let's go into the drawing-room," said Lady Griselda. "I want you all to see the magnificent

presents he received, some of them from the crowned heads of Europe."

But Dorothy lingered; and she and Ned did have a word of appreciation of the room and its contents. He would have talked at more length, for his enthusiasm was great; but Lady Griselda laid a hand on his arm and drew him along, saying that he must see the portrait of Scott and his dogs. To have released himself would have been rudeness; but at first he turned his head as he went on with her. In the drawing-room he called Dorothy to the portrait; but Dalkeith followed on and mingled his comments with theirs.

"I wish you had been here the other day to go up Scott's monument with us," wrote Dorothy from Edinburgh a few days later to her younger sister and brother. "We all performed the feat except Mrs. Pell who would not attempt it; and some of us breathed hard when we reached the top."

"But that wasn't Dorothy," interposed Harry.

"Don't interrupt," commanded Olive. "We'll hear your comments later."

"It's two hundred feet high," wrote Dorothy. "And you have to go up by winding steps in the darkness of Erebus, except for narrow openings here and there. But the view from the top is worth the climb—the city, the hills, the Firth of Forth. But if I begin to describe the scenery, I shall never finish. The monument is very beautiful, with a marble statue of Scott underneath its Gothic arches. Then there are statues of some of the characters in his books,

"YOUR ENTHUSIASM IS DELIGHTFUL," HE SAID.

and of famous Scottish poets. The guide told us a story of some American athlete who climbed out of one of the windows in the great tower and went up on the outside to the very top of the monument. I was indignant with him for having risked his life for nothing.

"But although this monument is so fine, and the people are so proud of it, I felt nearer to Scott, not only at Abbotsford, but also in other places near there, which I will tell you about another time.

"The first Sunday we were here we went to St. Giles. While we were in Edinburgh two religious conventions were being held in Scotland, one much opposed to the other. The service we attended was that of the established church of Scotland. At the hotel they advised us to go early, because the Lord High Commissioner would be there and the place would be crowded. And indeed it was. The procession that came into the church was most magnificent, from the choir boys in their beautiful gowns to the Highland regiment in its splendid uniform, the city council bearing the silver maces of office, the clergy, the judges in their great wigs, the moderators in their red cloaks, and the other functionaries of civic importance. Last of all, with the golden mace borne before him appeared the Lord High Commissioner himself, representing the king. He was accompanied by his wife, both magnificently dressed, with pages clad in red and gold bearing up his robe and her train. We saw the Duke of Buccleugh among those

who accompanied them; but his grandson and Lord Hervey sat with us."

Dorothy wrote out the other details of the ceremony which she thought would interest her readers. And she told them of many places and people and things she had seen in and about the city, and incidents of the visit, and stories that she had heard. In finishing, she said:

"When you two come to Edinburgh, you must be sure to go to Calton Hill and see the beautiful monument to our dear president, Abraham Lincoln, erected by Americans and Scottish Americans. From the base of the monument a freed slave looks up gratefully toward a life-sized bronze cast of Lincoln. This is one of the sights that will do your heart good so many miles from home."

"You ask me how I like Lord Dalkeith, mother dear," wrote Dorothy to Mrs. Brooke by the same mail. "I am sure I like him. He is excellent company, finely educated of course, and like Britishers of his class trying to appear as if he knew nothing—and not succeeding in it. Yet there are things in him I don't approve of; I suppose it is because our points of view differ so widely on some matters.

"Now, if you had only asked me what I think of his grandfather, it would have been easy to answer. He seems to me like some of Scott's fine old chevaliers, perhaps I should say noblemen, for there is nothing of the warrior about the duke. Yet I'm sure he would make a good general, for he is very able and he

likes to direct. I suspect his grandson resembles him in this. But Lord Dalkeith is very kind and very attentive to us all. He wants us to enjoy his own beautiful Scotland. It would be perfect if one were a spirit and did not feel the cutting winds that go through flesh and bones like a sword—not that I mind them, but I can't help feeling them. I've been told they are worse in Edinburgh than at Inverness so much further north. I call this wind the serpent in Eden. Colonel Pell says if there had been no worse serpent there, man would never have fallen—'no—woman, I mean,' he corrects, and looks at me and laughs. He is so genuinely fond of young people, it's delightful; and his jollity makes everything go. Mrs. Pell's dignity can't stand against it at all.

"I think I said that Lady Griselda is taking the Scotch tour with us. She is very devoted to Ned; and sometimes he seems to be to her; perhaps he really is. At any rate, it's amusing. It is supposed that she and Lord Dalkeith will be engaged some day; it doesn't seem to be a very near one. He doesn't appear to take to heart her interest in Ned; it gives him more time to attend to his American friends. But perhaps there is an understanding between them. But however they may arrange it, we are having a fine vacation among all these gay people.

"You would laugh to see Pell-Mell and Lord Hervey. He is in dead earnest, everybody can see. She knows it, too. But she jests, and says nobody can tell how long he will be so. Even I who know her so well, can't make out whether she cares for him.

But so long as her father and Mrs. Pell are satisfied, there is nothing for me to be troubled about; except that I couldn't bear to have anything painful touch the child. How little I thought the day that she tumbled into Hosmer Hall in such a way that I dubbed her 'Pell-Mell' that I should ever love her so much. But nobody who knows her can help it. And she is fascinating as well as lovable.

"They have strange ideas over here and draw lines so strangely. I get the impression once in a while, rather by a side light than directly, that they feel as if Ned were not really one of us because he does editorial work for a living, and writes plays, just as I try to do.

"My clothes seem to be about the right thing, although Mrs. Pell insisted upon my buying in London something fine for the dinner at the duke's. It sounds almost rudely familiar not to give him his title. But then, he is the only duke I know; so there will not be any mistake.

"Oh, mother, dear, how your little comrade, grown big, does want to tramp off all sole alone in an exploring expedition and discover something for herself. I see Colonel Pell looking at me with mischief in his eye sometimes. I think he suspects it. Yet he'll never help me out. He would not offend Mrs. Pell. But I'm enjoying everything, of course."

XVIII

HARRY MAKES SUGGESTIONS

A PERFECT summer day. The brilliant sunshine brought out in all its charm the beautiful home of Brookehurst.

As the morning light shone upon the graceful figure of a girl descending the steps of the stately house, her face bright with happiness, there flashed across her memory that November afternoon of her first term at the school of Hosmer Hall, when with heart sore at the sadness of her life and coming home wet and weary from her walk to the near-by town, she had been met by Dorothy Brooke and after having been ordered to change her wet clothing, had been brought into Dorothy's room and there warmed by a cup of hot tea and still more by the petting of her dear hostess; and had gone back to her studies feeling that, after all, she was not shut out from all the pleasant things of life. Ever since that day it had seemed that the bright things which came to her had come in some way, directly or indirectly, through Dorothy. And now, when life was so brimming with joy that she hardly dared to think of it, it was Dorothy's brother who had brought her this. She turned back and waited until he had joined her and the two went on together, and as they went she told him the history of that November afternoon—all but

her trouble about her father—and of what Dorothy had been to her.

"Yes," said Rex smiling to himself as he listened, "that's Doro. She is half an angel—but I hope she won't be a whole one for a long time. Fortunately, she has imperfections."

"What are they, Rex?" cried Lulu impetuously.

"Don't cross-question a fellow as if he were on the witness stand," laughed her lover. "I can't think of any on the spur of the moment; distance lends enchantment to the view of her, you see. But don't you want to go over to the hammock while I get the car ready? Harry is there under the trees. He's sitting with pen poised over a block of paper. Perhaps he, too, is turning literary, like another member of our family. But he is doing more orating to Nemo than writing. Do look at that dog standing listening open-mouthed. He wants to take it in in some way."

"Writing a theme, Harry?" asked Lulu Bromley seating herself beside the boy and returning Nemo's greeting by appreciative pats.

"Theme in vacation, Lulu! Not a bit of it!" retorted the boy. "I'm going to write to Dorothy. You send your love to her? You're going motoring with Rex? You're always doing it, you know."

"But I'm to be here only a short time," returned Lulu coloring; "and I have to take advantage of the motor-car. We haven't one at home; though I think grandmamma is going to get one some day."

"But some day isn't now. And the chauffeur won't be as nice as Rex," answered Harry teasingly.

"Are you going to tell Dorothy how much we all enjoyed her descriptions of the people and places she had seen?" Lulu questioned by way of diversion.

"Yes, of Edinburgh Castle where the red-nosed man who showed them about made Dorothy mad by insisting that the Marquis of Argyle, who was beheaded in Edinburgh ever so long ago, was a traitor. And there was Holyrood Palace so gloomy and full of sad memories. But, you remember, she was delighted with Roslin Castle with its ruins of the great kitchens and of the pits they used to put the prisoners into. She said she was glad those dungeons were ruins because it showed they didn't use such horrible places any more; they treated prisoners better nowadays."

"That sounds like Dorothy, doesn't it, Harry?"

"To a 'T'!" Then the boy sat a moment looking up at the speaker. "I think it's nice," he began, "you and Dorothy knew each other from the first, and didn't have to get acquainted after Rex came on the ground."

"Why, Harry," smiled Lulu, "you know I should never have seen Rex but for Dorothy."

"Why, that's true, you wouldn't," cried the boy. "Why, you must think a lot of her." He stopped abruptly, perceiving that he had put matters wrong. "But Rex must think ever so much more," he added hastily, "since he has got you."

Lulu laughed. And Harry returned to the subject of his sister's letter, declaring that he preferred a good many of the customs of his own land. "We do

lots of things better in America, Lulu, don't we?" he said. "I'm going to write her so."

"But they have a great many good things over there," she answered. "Oh, the car has come; and there is Rex waving to me. Write your letter while I am gone, Harry; and when I come back, wouldn't you like a game of tennis?"

"I'll be on hand," he called after her. And he promptly set to upon his letter, resolved to comment upon all the statements and incidents in his sister's epistle. But first he had to give her an account of some famous ball games in which the side in which he was interested had won and which, in truth, was more to him than anything across the water.

"One thing I must say," he wrote in finishing his account of these games, "the English are first-class sports. I've read of them. They love games so well that they're fair about them, and if they lose, they praise the winners! I call that fine. And I like their being fond of pets. And I like that cemetery for the animals you told me about, that you saw in Stratford, you remember, where the minister had buried his horses and dogs and cats, and put up markers. I shall feel like putting up a whole monument for Nemo. But I hope we won't have to come to it yet. And I like what you said about the waiters in the great restaurant in Edinburgh being good to the beautiful dog that came in there and feeding him instead of driving him out. And those little dishes filled with water and marked 'dog' at the entrances of the shops are fine. But if they have watering fountains for the

horses in the streets, and trays underneath filled with water for the dogs to drink out of, as we do here, why do they need the dishes? Though it's good to have both.

"Olive is expecting a lot of her schoolmates from Hosmer Hall. She is awfully afraid they won't have as much fun as your schoolmates did. Isn't it queer of her?

"It must be funny to see those beggars, boys and girls and bits of children, running beside the coaches and catching the pennies and silver the passengers throw out to them. But I don't think it's nice at all; and Olive says the city governments ought to put a stop to such begging. I guess there are a good many things over there that ought to be changed. But I'm glad they don't keep you from having a good time; they wouldn't me. And then the men in England—I don't mean the gentlemen—making the women carry all the bundles while they swing along empty-handed, that's a disgrace to them, Dorothy. I feel as if I should like to cane them, when I think of it! You see it's true that over there they really don't know as well as we do in America." This statement and some others Dorothy repeated to her companions, to their great amusement.

"I'm glad you sat in Sir Walter Scott's chair," finished Harry. "It would make some people proud; but Olive says you will spend the rest of your life regretting you can't fill it. Excuse that muddy spot on the paper; it's Nemo—his mark. He wanted to send his love to you; and he has put it there."

Dorothy stood in the hotel drawing-room, in too much haste to read her letter to go to her own room, or even to sit down. As at last she looked up from it, Ned was there, watching her.

"Homesick?" he asked her.

"Oh, no," she said answering his smile, "not when so many friends are with me here, and I am so soon to see the others again. News from your mother, Ned?" she asked noticing a letter in his hand. "How is she?"

For an instant the two pairs of eyes looked into each other, hers filled with an earnest solicitude, his speaking a language that his lips might not utter. Then her glance fell again to the letter she was holding, as he answered gravely:

"She says she is gaining, thank you. May I read you what she says of your mother's visit to her?"

"Oh, please do," said the girl.

There was praise of Mrs. Brooke which went to her daughter's heart.

"That makes me homesick," she said, a mist in her eyes as she lifted them to his.

"I am glad our mothers are friends, Dorothy—*dear*," he said softly. Then after standing a moment, his eyes upon hers, abruptly he turned on his heel, and left her.

She stood looking after him, her eyes dim. "Dear, brave Ned!" she whispered softly to herself.

"Oh, Dorothy, we've been looking for you everywhere," said Mrs. Pell entering the drawing-room followed by the young people. "Colonel Pell is arrang-

ing about the motor-cars. You are going with us?"

"Indeed, I am, if you want me, Mrs. Pell," declared the girl gayly.

"If we want you, Miss Brooke!" echoed Lord Dalkeith in her ear.

XIX

OLIVE AIRS HER SATISFACTIONS

On a fine summer afternoon soon after Lulu Bromley's visit to Brookehurst was over, the lawn of that beautiful estate was gay with a crowd of young people, Olive's lawn party, invited to meet the school friends who were now visiting the younger sister, as Dorothy's schoolmates from Hosmer Hall had come to Brookehurst. Olive wanted as many schoolmates as Dorothy had had, and desired as much to be done for their entertainment as had been done for her sister's guests.

Her mother while disturbed at the jealous spirit shown by her younger daughter, did all in her power to give it no occasion for existence. Indeed, she labored with far more assiduity to provide entertainment for Olive's guests than, with the exception of the Syrian children, she had ever done for Dorothy's who had seemed always able to entertain themselves, and sometimes Mrs. Brooke also, thanks to her elder daughter's tact and thoughtfulness. The lawn party was one of Olive's hospitalities. Her mother who was fatigued by numerous consultations and preparations, was resting, assured by Rex that he would have an eye to the way in which things were going.

It was in fulfilment of this promise that the young man who had deferred the proposed spin in his motor-

car and his visit to a friend, chanced in his sauntering about the grounds to come upon a group of Olive's guests surrounding their hostess, as the whole company on benches, or chairs, or on the pine needles at the edge of the group of trees, were devoting themselves to their refreshments. In the group about Olive, however, the spoonfuls of ice-cream went more slowly to the red lips of the tasters; for mouths as well as ears were open to absorb the statements of their hostess.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" finished Olive, "Lady Griselda and Lord Hervey and the Earl of Dalkeith are all going up north with Dorothy's party. She mentions them quite often in her letters. I imagine she sees a great deal of them." And she smiled significantly at her listeners.

"Of which of them most?" inquired Hetty Metcalf laughing.

Olive paused a moment. She recalled her mother's reproof for too constant mention of these titles which the girl delighted to utter, and the warning that it would make it disagreeable and embarrassing to Dorothy to seem to attach importance where there was probably none. She recalled, too, her father's response to such allusions to Dorothy's fine company, and his greeting of herself, "Here comes the little snob," which had caused Olive a few secret tears. And Judge Brooke had, as his daughter put it, rubbed this in; he had repeated it on several occasions, sometimes scornfully, sometimes teasingly, until he hoped the lesson had had its effect. He also had told her that she

was doing her sister no good, and making herself ridiculous. So that of late Olive had been more cautious.

But the present opportunity was too much for her. She did not see how she could do her sister an injury by making all the girls envy her this distinction; and glancing from one to another of the eager and expectant faces about her, she read there anything but ridicule for herself. So, her hesitation ended by her replying to Hetty:

"Oh, she sees them all, of course. But you know," she added, "I told you how she discovered Lord Dalkeith's grandfather, the Duke of Buccleugh. He has no end of castles and estates; and he has invited Dorothy and all the party to dine with him at his castle near Edinburgh when they are staying in the city."

"Oh! oh!" cried the girls. "Won't she have lots to tell you, Olive, when she comes home?"

"Perhaps she won't come home—to stay," interposed Effie Winston; "she may like it so much over there. And people—some people—may like her so much, she will live over there. How should you like that, Olive? Then, you know, you could go over there and visit her."

Olive dimpled. "Oh, that's going too fast," she protested. After a moment she added, "Lord Dalkeith's father is dead; he is his grandfather's heir."

"Did Dorothy tell you that?" asked Maud Melvin incisively. "Looks as if she was thinking about things, doesn't it?"

"Oh, no, indeed!" cried Olive roused to indignation. "Dorothy is not that kind. I—I found out about it in a book of Heraldry I picked up somewhere," she confessed reluctantly.

"I guess there's more in it than you'll own, if you took that trouble," declared Hetty triumphantly. "Let's see, girls, if she should marry an earl, she'd be—out with it, Olive, you're sure to know."

"A countess," admitted the latter.

"Yes, a countess. Then, by-and-by, of course, she'll be a duchess—my! We sha'n't dare to speak to Olive when she goes to visit her sister, the duchess!"

The girl suddenly perceived that she had gone too far; or had allowed them to do so. They were on the point of laughing at her. But as she opened her lips to protest, a voice behind her said:

"What fairy stories are you girls telling about duchesses? Do let me into the secret."

Turning, Olive faced Rex, his eyes flashing, his color high. She grew pale with fright. What would they say? What would he say?

"We're talking about your sister Dorothy, the duchess that is to be," retorted Maud with saucy defiance.

Now, Rex had no objection, except one, to Dorothy's being a duchess. In his heart, he thought nothing too good for her. That one objection was Ned; and Rex had never seen anybody better. But Ned was out of the running. A secret suggestion, however, scarcely

even a full-fledged wish, was one thing; and this open proclamation, as if the affair were so likely to come about that it amounted to certainty—why, it was an outrage!

His eyes met Maud's and held them sternly, while he answered in as light a tone as he could command at the moment:

"Oh, no, Miss Melvin, it is merely a fairy story. Olive is trying to imitate Dorothy in making up stories to be written out some day. Her will is good; but her invention is not like her sister's. Dorothy's may turn out genius; we can't tell yet. But, Olive, your invention is just balderdash. If I were you, I'd give my guests something more amusing."

"Oh, we were amused enough," whispered Hetty in an aside to her neighbor.

"I didn't say all those things. They made them up themselves out of—just nothing, a mere little fun," retorted Olive, inwardly shrinking at the sternness of the look her brother bent upon her, but putting as bold a face as she could upon the matter.

"Oh, a kind of round robin of fun, then?" returned Rex choosing to make as light as possible of the talk. "If it's a round robin, let me add my part. It's too bad to spoil your charming idyl, girls; but it's as much a fantasy as a fairy tale, you know. There is a duke; there is a Lord Dalkeith, his grandson; but I understand he is as good as engaged to Lady Griselda Hervey. And the whole party are off for a good time. And, as the children say, 'That's all there is about it.'"

He spoke with a more absolute conviction than he felt. But it was the truth at the present moment, and must be rammed into the brains of those silly girls, he said to himself. As for Olive, he found opportunity to say to her aside: "You shall have plenty more of this if you want it. See that you don't dare—" His flashing eyes and knitted brows finished the warning that Effie Winston had moved too near to allow him to put into words.

"It's all true, and you know it," said Olive in a return aside, as she deftly wheeled out of range of his eyes, and called to Nora, the maid, as she was passing, to bring more ice-cream.

It was many days, however, before Rex in the privacy of the family ceased calling her "the duchess' sister," until the nickname which spoken by herself in retirement, would have been sweet to her, became a chagrin; and although as proud as ever of what she was assured was a coming triumph, she seldom forgot herself so far as to boast of its possibility? When she did, the punishment was at hand—if Rex were.

"It's all nonsense, Olivia, isn't it?" asked Judge Brooke a little anxiously of his wife. "I think I would rather have our dear little girl on her own side of the water. But then—perhaps I'm a rather stiff American."

"But then," echoed his wife, "we won't cross the bridge until we come to it. Of course, if he is a fine fellow, it would be good in some ways. But I'm glad to believe that Dorothy will follow her heart."

"It's a good one, Olivia. But we've plenty of time."

They surely had. For Lord Dalkeith had not yet determined where his heart was, in case he should decide to follow it.

XX

IN A SCOTCH MIST

"'And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone,'"

quoted Colonel Pell with a nod and smile at Dorothy. "Here we are at the Brigg of Turk. But the horseman seems to be missing."

"He's been missing a good while," laughed Ned Longley. "But his ghost is always hanging about the scene."

"You seem to be fond of ghosts, Mr. Longley," remarked Lord Dalkeith a trifle superciliously.

"A good deal depends upon the kind. If you call Scott's characters, ghosts, I could stand them very well."

"So could I," declared Hervey who was looking about him with eyes kindling at the scenery of the Trossachs. He had often passed through them, but he never enjoyed them the less.

"You really and truly love scenery," said Priscy watching him.

"Yes, indeed! And you?" he answered her.

She gave him a hasty glance, all she could spare at that moment from the prospect before her. But he knew; for he had been watching her eager face. All

he had wanted was to make her turn her eyes to him, and to see the smile that lingered and deepened as her gaze rested upon one point after another of the ever-changing landscape, as the coach dashed on with Colonel Pell's merry party on top. They had started from Callander and had already passed Loch Vennachar, the river Teith, Coilantogle Ford, and other places described in "The Lady of the Lake." The morning was fair—for the Trossachs. But as the party came out of the fine hotel in the heart of these where they had had luncheon, the sunshine had disappeared, and with the suddenness of storms in that region, the sky was heavy with threatening clouds. The beautiful Loch Katrine was reached under a curtain of ever deepening gloom. Rain had begun to fall before the steamer had passed Ellen's Isle, and when it had crossed the lake and touched at the pier at Stronachlacher, there was a downpour.

In this they drove through Rob Roy's country, passing his cave where, as legend has it, Robert Bruce once found a hiding-place from his foes. And they passed the early home of Rob Roy's wife, the wronged Helen MacGregor, terrible in her revenges. As they swept on at a good pace, Dorothy asked the driver why they passed through so many gates?

"They are all open," she said. "What is the use of them?"

He gave her the name of the nobleman through whose land they were driving.

"Is this not a public road for everybody to travel freely?" she asked, turning to Colonel Pell.

"Why, I suppose so. But I'll pass on the question to you, Lord Hervey. "How is it?"

"I suppose so, too. It's the only road we have," replied the latter.

"And private individuals own public roads?" asked Dorothy of him. "That's something I never heard of, except sometimes a little cross street not yet opened, or a pasture path. And on the first the town puts up a sign, 'dangerous', and the people go at their own risk. I'm asking you merely for information," she added.

"Put it into your note-book, Miss Brooke," he laughed.

"Do you have roads like these on your own estates?" she asked him.

"It's my belief we do—only, I hope they're a little better."

There fell a moment's silence, broken by Ned's pointing out a fine effect of the mist on the hills. And the merry talk was resumed.

At Inversnaid the rain had become so heavy that they would have passed the night at the hotel there, hoping for sunshine the following day, but that Colonel Pell was obliged to hurry on to Glasgow for his mail in which there might be something of importance.

The little steamer across Loch Lomond lost a number of its passengers for that voyage, the weather keeping them at Inversnaid. But it seemed to Mrs. Pell that there were still more than enough who had decided to go on, and its very small cabin was packed with those seeking protection from the rain.

"I can't stand this storm," she said. "I must go into the cabin, crammed as it is. Come, my dear," she added to Priscy.

"No, thank you, mamma," returned the girl. "I'd rather be drenched than suffocated; so, if you please, I'll stay outside."

"Let us take this place," said Lord Hervey. "The rain slants against the cabin and gives us a little shelter. It's odd," he added, "that you Americans who have so much sunshine always put up awnings on your lake and river boats, while we who have rain so much of the time, never think of doing such a thing."

"I really wish you did," she sighed, as with raincoat wrapped about her, she seated herself on the damp bench, the only refuge and already more than half filled with passengers. Hervey beckoned to his sister who was standing with her eyes fixed on the shore from which people were still passing over the gang plank. But as she caught his invitation, she shook her head and remained standing. At the moment Dalkeith stepped upon the plank. But Lady Griselda did not appear to notice him; she was watching the few stragglers now passing out from the door of the hotel. Colonel Pell had waited to make inquiries as to trains, and had asked Longley to see to the luggage.

In the forepart of the boat stood Dorothy, for the moment alone. As she must endure the storm, she preferred to defy it. Dalkeith caught a view of her profile with face uplifted toward the mountains, on the sides of which the mist was trailing heavily. Her

bright eyes were scanning their tops for the outlines lost in the rain, her lips half smiling, as if in spite of wind and weather, her thoughs were happy. She was certainly beautiful, thought the young man. He did not like her ideas; yet he perhaps admired her the more for them and for their fearless expression. He had been so accustomed to adulation, that Dorothy's indifference as to whether she pleased him or not had its fascination, and strengthened his desire to make her care. As he watched her, his eyes kindled with delight. Hers was not the paint that rubbed off, he said to himself smilingly, looking at the delicate yet fresh complexion that had never known powder or cosmetics of any kind, but owed its beauty to air and water and healthful living and thoughts of power and blessing. That day the beating of the rain against her face had heightened her color and brought a laughing defiance to her eyes. Dalkeith admired her energy, and even that independence which he felt that he ought to condemn. She did not see him; she was not looking for him, or anybody; she was enjoying the mountains, veiled as they were, and even the weather. She could battle against more than rain, and conquer it, the watcher perceived. But with him she would never have to do it. Fortune would smile, if the skies did not. But she had looked at those misty mountains long enough. Now she should look at him, if not with admiration, at least with attention; for he could make himself very interesting, and he was disposed to do it to Dorothy Brooke.

He took a step toward her.

"Oh, Henry, do find me a dry spot in this deluge. We ought to have staid at the hotel." He had been mistaken in believing that Lady Griselda had not seen him. She came forward now and laid a hand upon his arm with the familiarity of old friendship, and, at least the reminder of that further claim which both knew that their families expected.

But the instant he heard her voice and felt her light touch, he involuntarily repudiated this claim. As he glanced at her, he wanted a hundred times more to go to Dorothy. And he would do it, too.

"Since it's a deluge, I don't see how I can save you from it," he answered lightly, looking about him for some place in which to deposit her.

"Why don't you come here?" called Hervey again, this time to them both. "You can't do better, and you may do much worse. It's beginning to rain harder."

"As if it could!" laughed Priscy.

"Let us go," said Dalkeith, drawing his companion with him as he went on. He could not take a seat there; that must be left for some lady. He would be free.

But just as having seated her, he had begun to move away, promising to come back, he saw Longley cross the gangway, look about him for an instant, and then turn in the direction in which he himself was headed. Longley was in advance, and Dalkeith could not win the race over that hasty and decided step. Should he follow? It was not a rôle to which he was accustomed, or which he enjoyed. He hesitated while Longley

reached and greeted Dorothy, and stood holding his umbrella over her. The watcher saw her shake her head ruefully as they looked down at the water-logged benches, and then lean resignedly against one of them and listen to her companion.

And now why should not this watcher tell them of the seat on the more sheltered bench? Once there, Griselda would be sure to have many questions for Longley. It was his opportunity. He believed himself unperceived by the two who were now talking merrily.

He was mistaken. Ned's quick glance had caught sight of the other hovering on the brink of interposition. The sudden fire in his eye, the straightening of his tall figure, the defiance in his face warned Dalkeith that he could not interfere without a battle with this keen fellow, a battle in which victory was not likely to perch upon his own banners. He stood eying Longley with a disapproval that at the moment amounted to hatred. Who was this fellow so successfully lofty? A playwright, an editor—both excellent occupations for amusement, or for adding to an already good rent roll. But Longley was penniless, or so it had been reported, a mere workman, with nothing but his fine looks and this air of being monarch of all he surveyed. He was by no means one of themselves. And yet, after all, the moment was not opportune for interference. For another minute he kept his watch. Was the fellow making love to her as he stood looking down with that air of devotion, talking, listening, smiling, sometimes answering Dorothy's laugh which had a happy ring in it that maddened Dalkeith.

But Ned was at heart miserably jealous of the young nobleman. Some day he must give place to him, or to another man, what matter to whom if he would make Dorothy happy? But between herself and him stood the bar of his poverty and the mother whom at all costs he must maintain and his devotion to whom even his love for Dorothy did not shake. But for all that, he would now and then have a talk as in the dear old days; and this was all that he was doing now. He observed with silent triumph when Lord Dalkeith disappeared.

But soon afterward when the latter took another peep in that direction, the duet had become a trio. For Colonel Pell was there, and the three were making their own sunshine in spite of the downpour. The watcher moved forward now and joined them.

Ned eyed him with smiling amusement. "Why, where have you kept yourself all this time?" he inquired innocently. "Evidently, not out of the rain, any more than the rest of us."

"This is what you call a Scotch mist, I take it?" Colonel Pell asked him.

"Decidedly," replied Dalkeith. "And you know what they say of a Scotch mist—that it wets an Englishman to the skin."

"I don't see that it's any kinder to Americans, or even to its own countrymen," said Dorothy.

Colonel Pell asked him some questions as to English politics. Ned joined in the conversation that followed; and Dorothy listened, with an occasional interested comment or question.

But Ned Longley's talk with Dorothy that afternoon, his being dog in the manger, as he put it to himself, was not without its results. For as Dalkeith made the quartette in that little group and talked and listened with apparent indifference, he realized that he was no longer uncertain as to his own mind. He knew at last exactly what he wanted; he wanted Dorothy; and he wanted her very badly. Marry her, he would. Neither this playwright fellow, nor anybody else should stand between them.

But she was so different from other girls he had known that he was not sure how long it would take to bring her to the same opinion.

XXI

ONE LOST; AND ONE FOUND

"The Art Galleries, the University, the Botanic Gardens, and, last and best, the famous Glasgow Cathedral!" declared Priscy. "It's worth while to see a building any part of which has stood since the twelfth century. Imagine any of our buildings standing over seven hundred years!"

Her father laughed. "It would take a vivid imagination, Priscilla," he said. "But then, you see, this is not a sky-scraper."

"I think the most interesting part of the whole cathedral is underground," declared the girl as they were standing in one of the crypts, "Blackadder's Aisle". "It is like a miniature city here with the passages for streets. It reminds me of a labyrinth."

"Look at the coat of arms of the old Bishop of Blackadder," said Longley. "Is it his own family arms, I wonder, or the insignia of his office?"

Nobody could tell him. But when they entered another crypt in their visit to the cathedral, Lady Griselda who believed that Longley had a liking for all inscriptions, called upon him to read to them a list of Protestant martyrs punished for their heresy. The writing was difficult to decipher and the list much too long for the patience of the listeners. Hervey whispered to him to skip, which he did. Still, they were all

bored, as they turned to leave the crypt. Then it was that Dorothy cried out:

"Where's Priscy? She must have been bored beyond endurance," she confided aside to Colonel Pell.

He nodded. "She must be close at hand," he said. But Dorothy saw how pale he was; and it alarmed her to perceive that the guide was immediately uneasy.

"Priscilla! Miss Pell! Priscy! Pell-Mell!" rang out shouts in different voices and into different passages near where the group was standing.

But there was no response.

"You might get lost here for a week, if you didn't have any key to help you out," said the guide nervously, a poor consolation for the searchers whose anxiety was momentarily increasing. For Priscy's suggestion had been true, the place was in a sense a labyrinth. When repeated calls had brought no reply, the matter became serious.

"You knew the danger, why did you not watch all the party?" asked Colonel Pell turning upon the guide.

"I thought I had, sir," returned the man. "She must have slipped by me when I wasn't looking for the minute."

But recrimination was waste of the time that must be spent in search. "You must find her," said Priscy's father beginning to move forward.

"No, no, all of you stay where you are," entreated the guide; "or I shall have to be racing after you all. I'll find the young lady."

But nobody heeded him. As he started off, they all did the same, except Mrs. Pell who remained because her husband demanded it of her.

"Stay with Mrs. Pell, Miss Brooke," entreated Lord Dalkeith.

But Ned understood Dorothy too well to ask this of her. "Let us go and look for Priscy," he said to her. And he put himself beside her.

"Yes, but not together," she answered him. "We should waste time so. Let each of us take a different direction. Then, somebody will find her." There was a tremble in her voice as she hurried away. Colonel Pell and Ned had already disappeared in the search. But Lord Dalkeith persisted in accompanying her, until she turned upon him. "If you do not leave me and try to find my dear friend," she cried, "I shall never forgive you—never. I am in no danger of being lost. I shall watch my way."

He reluctantly turned aside and began to search also.

Dorothy heard Lord Hervey's voice far in the distance. But the paths were winding and intricate in the part of the building in which she now found herself, and she was compelled to go slowly. The guide who in passing waited to caution her when he found that she would not turn back, told her of a lower cellar somewhere in that neighborhood. It was incompletely covered. He could not tell the exact spot; he hoped the young lady had not slipped into it. If they did not find her soon, he would go for lights and assistance.

When he had hurried forward, Dorothy stood leaning against the wall, too weak to move. Pell-Mell

perhaps fallen into a cellar! The guide did not know how deep it was. Was she hurt very terribly? Was she even living? The imagination which in her story-writing played so excellent a part, now magnified her fears by picturing all the horrors that might have befallen the girl. "Darling child!" she said to herself. How beautiful, how lovely, how loving she was! If she were hurt and suffering! Or worse, if— Dorothy thrust back this worst suggestion, and went on as fast as she could in the dim, uncertain way, calling and listening. But always there was silence, except when she heard the calls of the other searchers.

Ned had taken a side path unnoticed by the others; and after many calls, he fancied that he heard a faint sound in answer. He listened; but there was silence. It might have been only an echo; or a distant shout of some one searching. Surely, there had been a noise of some kind. He followed on.

At last he came to the entrance of a small room. As he stood in the doorway trying to make out what was in the darkness beyond, a figure moved toward him, slowly at first as if caution were imperative. Then there came a rush, and Priscy's arms were thrown about him.

"Oh, you dear Ned Longley!" cried the poor child, her voice almost inarticulate with sobs. "I thought I should never see anybody I knew again. I thought nobody could ever find me here. There's a pit, or something dreadful here. After I came in, as I was walking along one foot went out over nothingness." She shuddered, and Ned drew her more closely to him

to assure her of her safety. "And then," she said, "I did not dare to move, even to try to get out. I thought I never could. Oh, Ned, I've lived years in this place. Oh, how I thank you for finding me." She had drawn away from him now; but she still held his hand as if she feared he would vanish if she let him go, and he drew her into the passage which was lighter than the room.

"But, Priscy," he said, putting his arm through hers, for she was trembling, "what made you go off, you funny child?" He spoke lightly to reassure her.

"Why, you did, Ned," she answered. "I thought you'd never be done reading that tiresome stuff."

"I thought so too," he said in a confidential tone that at another time would have made her laugh.

"I thought I went only a few steps," she said. "Then when I tried to come back and join you all, I couldn't find the way. That frightened me and I began to run; and I kept turning here and there until I was so wound up it made me terrified. I knew I was all wrong, it got so dark. And then I was here; I don't know how. And then you came, Ned. The angels must have guided you."

"That would not be so strange," he answered her. "But don't think any more about it now. Rest a few minutes, and when you feel able we will try to find our way back."

The girl uttered a cry. "Try to find our way! Are you lost, too, Ned? Oh, we shall never get to the others—never! never! We shall stay here and die."

"Poor child! she must have had a frightful experience," thought Ned. He wished some one would come and find them for her sake. And with the thought he heard a shout, and answered it.

Approaching footsteps quickened to a run; and the next moment Hervey appeared.

"Oh, Miss Pell! How good to see you! How thankful I am."

"She has been much alarmed and is still faint," said Ned. "Will you lead her very slowly back to the others and let me run on ahead and announce the good news? Put your arm in hers, please. She mustn't try to stand alone yet."

Longley was a good fellow after all, thought Hervey listening to the retreating footsteps. The latter hurried on as fast as he could trace backward the path he had carefully marked in coming. His calls brought Dorothy who had wandered nearly as far as himself, but in another direction. Directly afterward Dalkeith appeared, for in spite of her commands, he had kept track of her. At the entrance where Mrs. Pell was waiting they found Lady Griselda who had soon given up the search to others who would do much better than she could.

And now Colonel Pell had to be searched for; and when, at last, he appeared, they waited for Priscy and Lord Hervey to join them.

Left with her, the latter drew her hand within his arm where it rested willingly, for she was still trembling. He bent over her, not trying to hide his gratitude and joy in her rescue.

"Do you know, Miss Pell," he said to her, "that you were in the only really dangerous room in all the building; in the others you would have been lost for a time, but here—did you find any opening in the floor?"

"Didn't I nearly fall into it?" gasped the girl, and her voice was a whisper of horror, and she shuddered. "That was what terrified me so," she added. "I did not dare to move, even to try to come out, until I saw Ned."

He drew the little hand closer on his arm. "Forget it now," he said tenderly. "We have all been terrified for you."

Priscy quickened her steps. "We must hurry all we can," she answered. "Papa will be so anxious about me. Do you really know the way back?" she questioned, as he hesitated, looking this way and that. "Shall we call again? I cannot endure being lost a second time." And again she shivered.

"You will not be, dear—Miss Pell," he answered. "I have the way now, I am quite sure."

As they joined the others, she caught a flashing glance of anger from Lady Griselda at sight of the hand still on her brother's arm. And Priscy who had been about to withdraw it, left it there.

As Hervey was giving an account of the danger she had escaped, she turned at the sound of a step behind her. For Colonel Pell had vanished again, endeavoring to find the way by which they were coming.

"Oh, papa!" she cried running to him. "You are

the naughty one after all. Don't you see we've all been waiting for you?"

Dorothy saw the man's face which had been haggard with anxiety flash into radiance as his daughter hung upon him.

"We will neither of us do it again," he said smiling down upon her.

As the steamer was passing through the Kyles of Bute, Dorothy was admiring the wonderful scenery as much as it was possible to do with Priscy on one side and Lord Dalkeith on the other talking to her, to each other, to Hervey just beyond. Ned who had resolved not to be dog in the manger that day was devoting himself to Lady Griselda, or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that he was responding to her demands upon his attention. But if so, he was doing it with a zest that imposed upon more than one observer. Even Dorothy from under her long lashes glanced at the two, to wonder if he really did more than admire Lady Griselda, as he openly professed to do? She could make herself most attractive, and to Ned she always did it; he had said to Dorothy of Lady Griselda that she was charming. Stranger things had happened than a sudden new fancy. Yet she did not believe it. Then she turned again to those about her.

The boat which had touched at Dunoon for passengers was getting under way again.

"Only look at those people," said Dorothy in a laughing undertone to Colonel Pell, and she nodded toward a group of tourists on another part of the

steamer. "They are so anxious to make sure that they don't miss anything down in the guide books that they're missing everything outside of them; they give only occasional glances at the landscape, just to verify."

He looked and laughed.

"That sounds exactly like Dorothy Brooke!" cried a voice behind her.

She turned, and her eyes opened wide in amazement.

"And this looks exactly like Sara Osborne!" she cried joyously. "You dear old thing! How delightful!" And the two girls came as near to hugging one another as the proprieties of the occasion permitted.

"And there's Pell-Mell!" cried Sara as her glance traveled half-way down the length of the boat. "Yes, and there's Ned Longley." Her look took in Lady Griselda, and then turned with a quizzical expression back to Dorothy, and blazed with suppressed fun as Lord Dalkeith promptly came up to be presented.

"My! My! Dorothy," she made opportunity to whisper, "you *are* in the swim. What's up?"

XXII

IS MISS BROOKE HERE?

"YES, indeed, Lord Dalkeith, at times she looks as demure as propriety itself. But don't take—" Sara Osborne called herself back from the slang of which she was so fond and which her friends warned her she would some day utter to her undoing—"don't pin your faith to that," she finished. Miss Brooke can beat us all at a lark when she puts her mind to it."

"When she puts her voice to it, don't you mean?" interposed Colonel Pell who with his wife had joined the group of young people sitting in one of the public rooms of a hotel at Oban, talking over the day's excursion, and a few incidentals, before it came time to scatter to prepare for dinner, and especially watching for the arrivals on the boat now due; for the window of the room overlooked the pier.

"It's not fair to tell tales out of school," declared Dorothy.

"Not when they're the best tales you have, and you want to make a good impression? Pell-Mell knows all about it."

Colonel Pell frowned. Another to call his daughter "Pell-Mell," the one thing about Dorothy he disliked, perhaps because it was a reminder of the days of his neglect which he would fain forget. But Sara

did not see his look, and he at once recovered his equanimity.

"Well, what are you going to begin with? And I'll follow your lead," answered Priscy. "Sara Osborne, there are a few stories about you, too."

"Oh, yes; but nothing to mind; they've not the spice of Dorothy's experiments in different directions —imitations of teachers, giving disapproved permissions, and so forth." Dorothy laughed and the speaker continued: "And during the days of her discipline, writing a bird story that took us all off our feet, and then turning it into a play that we, girls, acted to perfection—there's nobody to deny that." And she looked about her saucily. "There's where Ned came in," she went on; "he helped to dramatize; and they've been at it ever since. They're destined to hold the middle of the stage yet."

"It seems to me," declared Ned, "I heard from Grace the tale of a band of weeping maidens sacrificing their dearest finery on the altar of duty to protect the birds from slaughter."

"Oh, no, they were not sacrificed on an altar," cried Dorothy; "they were dumped into the lake. That was Pell-Mell's suggestion; and we followed it out in style."

"That we did—even to nearly dumping in ourselves. Do you remember, Dorothy?"

While these and other reminiscences were going on, the boat arrived; but the group in the room was too much occupied to notice it, or the passengers, some of whom wended their way from the pier to this hotel.

Among them were three persons, a dumpy woman dressed with a perfect taste that gave her a certain elegance; a girl of medium height who although she was handsomely clad, would have looked a lady in homespun; and a man under thirty, somewhat short and of a figure which training kept from awkwardness but could not bring to gracefulness, and a face the plainness of which was redeemed by fine eyes and an expression at once shrewd and good-humored.

"I'll go behind," said Mrs. Bridges suddenly drawing out from her place between the others. "And if they see you, they'll pounce upon Miss Longley and wonder how she came here. I do hope Miss Brooke and the rest are at this hotel, it's such a fine one. Of course, Miss Longley must be in the same place with her friend. My! how slow you are! Do go on faster. I want to find out if she's here, and to see what's going to happen."

The other two were not in such haste to see what was going to happen. But they obediently quickened their steps, not enough, however, to satisfy Mrs. Bridges, who by the time that the office of the hotel was reached was in advance of her companions.

"Ask if she's here before you register," she said to her son; and then before he had time to comply, she walked directly to the desk. "Is Miss Brooke here? Is she staying in this house?" she asked the clerk. At his assent, a bell-boy volunteered the information that he thought the lady was in that room. She alertly followed her informant, reluctantly trailed by her son and Grace Longley.

Sara Osborne was at the height of her reminiscences. "And then, the summer before she went to college," she was relating, "Dorothy went to board where Miss Leslie spent her summers, went with her, you know. Miss Leslie is now Mrs. Harris, but then she was one of our teachers at schools. Dorothy took her typewriter, to have a chance to work at her themes and stories, and practice on the dramas. One of the boarders there took her for a typewriter girl; and didn't she try to put her down! Dorothy had an immense time, and no end of fun over it. The son, you see——"

Here a hand was laid sharply on the speaker's arm, and Priscy Pell said imperatively:

"Hush, Sara! There she is now! Look, Dorothy," she whispered with gaze upon the open door through which a figure was advancing.

Dorothy turned; and her eyes opened in surprise. But the next moment the sight of a girl's figure behind the lady's gave a new warmth to her welcome.

"Why, Mrs. Bridges! How do you do? When did you come?" she asked giving her hand to the one outstretched for it.

"By the boat that's just arrived; and I looked you up immediately. You see, I knew I had brought my welcome with me." And she nodded approvingly as, unmindful of onlookers, Dorothy took Grace in her arms.

"You dear child!" she cried. "How lovely to see you! Now everything will be better if we can see it together."

"I told you so!" cried Mrs. Bridges in an aside to her son. "We are all right."

But he saw the cloud on Mrs. Pell's brow, which Dorothy talking to her friend, and Grace her eyes upon Ned, failed to notice.

"Randolph, we can't have that woman with us," said Mrs. Pell in an undertone which reached Sara Osborne and her sister, Mrs. Haven, whom she was accompanying.

"She's the very woman we were talking about," whispered the former to Mrs. Pell. "My! my! What luck! Of course, we must fire her." And she nodded energetically at Colonel Pell.

"How do you propose to do it?" he answered. "A young lady so skilful in all devices ought to have something to suggest."

"What does it all mean?" questioned Hervey aside of Dalkeith. "Who is that queer woman? The others are decent enough."

"I suspect she's one of the American multi-millionaires," returned Dalkeith in the same key. "She's so sure she is right. The young woman must be Longley's sister, or they would not embrace in public. But how she happens to be in the other's tow I don't understand."

By this time Ned had come forward to Mrs. Bridges. It could not be said that he was glad to see her. But he was mindful of the genuine interest and kindness shown him by her husband, and of her own relations with Grace.

She greeted him effusively. "It's quite like home

to see you, Mr. Longley. You see, in a way," she added addressing the company, "he belongs to us. He writes advertisements for my husband; and everybody says he does it splendidly. And then with his sister, Miss Longley, as my dear companion, he seems quite one of the family."

There came a brief silence. Everybody present, with two exceptions, admired the pluck and devotion of these two to their mother. They knew the circumstances. But Mrs. Bridges' peculiar presence and abrupt announcement fell strangely upon the ears of the two noblemen, and all the more so that they had known nothing, except in the most general way, of Longley's circumstances, or his misfortunes.

"I told you he was an interloper, a mere workman," commented Dalkeith to his friend. "Why, you see, he's an employé of that woman's husband. That's enough. And to ape the proudest—it's too much!"

"I don't think he apes," returned Hervey. "It seems to be there naturally."

"All the worse, Hervey," retorted the other. But he kept to himself the resolution awakened by this revelation, that he would sweep Longley out of the path, like the nobody the fellow was.

Ned himself was too proud to be ashamed of work undertaken with his purpose. Yet for a moment he wished she had not spoken. Then he came to himself.

"Thank you, Mrs. Bridges," he answered cordially. "I'm glad you think so well of my work. I should be at it now but for your husband's kind insistence upon my having a vacation." His tall figure seemed

taller, and his proud head reared itself even more proudly as he spoke. He knew as well as if he had heard it the criticism of those who were watching him.

Dorothy introduced Sara Osborne and Mrs. Haven both of whom stood beside her. But after a word with them, Mrs. Bridges' glance wandered again to Mrs. Pell. The latter had greeted her entrance by a cold nod. She now turned her eyes away, and met Dorothy's. The girl's dearest friends were dependent for their mother's comfort, perhaps for her life, upon the family so unfortunately represented here. Moreover, Dorothy had the heart of a lady; she could not wilfully hurt another's feelings. For an instant the eyes of these two spoke the silent language of which all the world is master. Then Mrs. Pell came forward with as much graciousness as her dislike and condescension would allow, and shook hands with Mrs. Bridges, and asked her a question or two concerning her journey. Dorothy meanwhile had looked at Charley Bridges; and the next moment her hand was in that of the man who had one day saved her life, and whom she had rewarded by refusing to marry.

And then Mrs. Bridges' eyes turned inquiringly upon the two strangers who had been merely spectators in the scene. But at that moment Grace suggested to her in an undertone that it must be time to go to their rooms, if they were to be ready for dinner.

"True, Miss Longley. That's something to be thought of. Miss Brooke, your dear friend and my dear companion is always right, my dear. Well, I

hope we shall all meet again." And with her arm in Grace's, she trotted off.

"Now, Dorothy, you never could have brought out a story so pat as that!" cried Sara Osborne when a peep had convinced her that the new arrivals were out of sight and hearing. "Now, could you?"

"No, I could not," said the girl. "I give up beaten."

"Oh, no; you'll never do that. You and Ned will have to dramatize it."

Dorothy smiled. That was the last thing that either of them would do.

Charley Bridges as he followed his mother, told himself that they ought never to be there, that it was a mistake, that from the first he had known it would be.

"Dorothy is always an angel; she couldn't be anything else," he thought. "But the Pell would have been a dragon, if she hadn't subdued her." Then a look of amusement came into his eyes. "How well the little girl, as dad calls her, contrived to get mamma out of the room," he soliloquized. "I was on thorns to know how to manage, or to know what would come next. She is a little brick!"

XXIII

ON THE ROCKS OF STAFFA

The steamer making the trip from Oban to Staffa and Iona and through the Sound of Mull, ploughed with a drunken reel through the waters tossed by the winds and swept almost into combers by the cross currents of intersecting channels on that broken coast. The boat pitched and rolled and plunged diagonally, to right, to left, forward, and, as it seemed, backward, and, apparently, in all directions at once. The young people were remarkably subdued for spirits so lively. Even Colonel Pell who was never seasick declared that that day he had come as near it as possible to him. As to Mrs. Pell, she was helpless, hopeless, and suffering so much, that when they had reached Staffa, that little island built of rock and honeycombed by the waves, and the life-boats and other boats to carry the passengers to the cave had swept out from the near-by island of Gometra and rested waiting for their living freight, she begged her husband not to leave her.

"Let the young people go by themselves," said this usually scrupulous chaperon. They will take care of one another, and the seamen will look after them all. There will be no accident. I'm too ill to be left, Randolph." Colonel Pell did not leave her, and with genuine regret the party started off without them.

To the faithful Highland sailors of the waiting life-boats is intrusted, not only the care of the passengers while on these islands, but the decision, made in advance, upon what part of Staffa their boats shall land that day. Very seldom is there sufficient calmness of wind and sea to allow the boats to enter Fingal's Cave. Generally they land their passengers at Clam Shell Cave on the further side of the island. So it had been found necessary to do that day. From there they would be obliged to climb the rock stairs to the point of greatest interest, Fingal's Cave.

Dorothy enjoyed the tossing of the boat as it rode the waves. Priscy who was rather frightened sat silent. Mrs. Bridges had professed herself too poor a sailor to venture into these rough waters at all; Oban was good enough for her, she said; and her son refused to crowd himself into Mrs. Pell's party, or as his mother announced, he chose to remain with her. But she had insisted that Miss Longley go with her brother. This was how it came about that as they were all rowed to the island, Dorothy perceived Grace's hand nestled into Ned's as the two sat side by side. It was seldom now that these two could be together; and yet their mutual sorrow had the more endeared them to one another.

The landing was safely accomplished and with little difficulty, although the boats tossed on the waves like cockleshells. Then having viewed the objects of interest about them, there came the climbing of the great rock stairs which form the causeway to the cave. They went on in a group, talking and laughing, yet

with care of their steps; for the height of each stone of the stair was great and the rocks were slippery.

"Make three wishes in Fingal's Wishing Chair, Miss Brooke, and they will all be granted," said Lord Dalkeith. "Let me help you up into it."

"Oh, no, Dorothy, don't!" cried Grace. "It's too dangerous. Don't try it."

"You've said to her the very thing that will make her do it," laughed Sara Osborne.

"It's not at all dangerous, if you are careful; and I will see that you are. I really hope the security of the undertaking won't make it seem beneath your attempt," laughed Dalkeith. "Do come." He held out his hand, and by its aid Dorothy climbed into the huge seat to which had been given Fingal's name.

"It is fine!" cried the girl looking perhaps more comfortable than she felt.

"Now for the three wishes! Hush—everybody! and let her wish," cried Sara as Dorothy sat with her head bent in thought.

"I do hope you will let me hear at least one of the wishes," whispered Dalkeith. "Wish that you'll come to this wonderful place many times. And wish——"

"It's not my wishing if you tell me what to wish, Lord Dalkeith. And how do you know what I want most?"

"I don't," he answered. "I only wish I did, and that—" He broke off and stood silent, watching her.

"Now, I'm ready to abdicate," said Dorothy. "I've made my three wishes."

"And now you'll tell us what they are?"

"Don't you know, Lord Dalkeith, wishes never come to pass if you tell beforehand what they are?" returned Dorothy, her face flushing in memory of what those wishes had been.

The descent from the wishing chair was more difficult than had been the climb into it. But with Dalkeith's skilful aid, she accomplished it well. Ned had stood aside; but he had waited with Grace, watching until Dorothy was upon the great rock steps again.

Entering Fingal's Cave, they saw with exclamations of delight the prismatic hues shown in the subdued light upon the stalactites in the roof of the cave, white, crimson, yellow, and reflected in the water which itself also was tinged by the dark red rocks beneath it. On the floor of the cavern the waves rushing in from the ocean, dashed themselves violently against the very end of it, and threw their spray high in air, and filled all the space with their roar. In single file up the slippery path on the top of the broken columns went the young people, holding fast by the rope that led them almost to the innermost recess of the cave where just beneath them the wave dashed against the rocks, curled and fell back again, to mingle its spray and roar with that of the incoming wave.

Whether Dorothy was still thinking of the wishes she had made, or merely desired to withdraw from the voluble exclamations that greeted this marvel of nature which she herself would have chosen to view in silence, she might not herself have known. But in the midst of these exclamations which were many and very

audible, she passed out of the cave unobserved for the moment, and began her return along the causeway with its huge and slippery stairs. A banister of rope ran along the wall of rock on the inner side of the pathway. On this she laid her hand, and sauntered on, now glancing at the height above her, now at the rocks beneath, and again at the tossing sea far below, where in distant view lay the steamer to which they were to return.

After she had gone on for a time, she stood still, looking off to sea; and now as if this fascinated her, she could not withdraw her gaze. At first she did not realize that she had stopped because she could not go on. The longer she looked at the waves, the more they seemed to dance before her eyes, until she perceived that her head was swimming. She clutched desperately at the rope in her hand; yet it seemed to her that her grasp upon it was loosening. What did it mean? She was never dizzy; that is, she had never been dizzy before. Had the varied antics of the steamer affected her? Was this a kind of seasickness?

She braced herself. It was not her way to call out in trouble. At such times she was silent. But even if she should call now, who could hear her through the roar of the tide? There were many who would miss her if she fell. She must not fall. She braced herself still more.

But the dizziness increased. She did not dare to release the rope, even long enough to allow her to sit down on the great stair upon which she was standing;

in attempting it, she might topple over. What could she do? For she could not keep even her present hold long.

But she had been missed from the cave by two persons at the same moment, Lord Dalkeith and Ned Longley. Both turned in silence to look for her. The former who was nearer the entrance, came out upon the causeway first. As he did so, he caught sight of Dorothy. She seemed in need of help; he would give it to her. He hurried forward.

Soon, however, he heard steps behind him. Glancing backward, he found Longley a close second; he had come almost upon the other who had slackened his pace to look behind. Dalkeith had been going on in a pleasing dream of coming to Miss Brooke's aid exactly as she needed aid most. It would give him opportunity to speak to her as he was always longing to do, at least, to say some word to express his devotion. Therefore his wrath rose to white heat at sight of Longley, the man he would have viewed as a rival but for the assertion that the fellow was beneath it, and yet whom in his secret heart he feared. He turned upon him.

"Go back!" he cried fiercely. "You are not needed here, writer of advertisements. Keep your own place—your distance. Go back, I say." And he bent nearer, as if by flashing eyes and strident voice he could enforce his commands. His back was to Dorothy; her danger for the moment forgotten.

Longley in his fury was ready to seize Dalkeith and hurl him upon the rocks below. Whether in other

case he would have yielded to the rush of madness which that instant possessed him, he never knew. He always humbly hoped not. But at the moment he could not even listen to his fury. For between him and it stood the girl who more than once had seemed to him his guardian angel. Dorothy came first; her need was stronger than the call of rage.

"Look at her!" he cried hoarsely. "Aren't you going to save her?" Then as Dalkeith unable for the moment to lift himself out of his obsession, still stared at him without moving, Longley stooped, and with his hand on the step on which he was standing, sprang down to the ledge of rock below, thus passing the other who had blocked his way, and sped forward. "Hold on, Dorothy!" he called out the next instant. "You're not going to fall; you're all right. Keep fast hold on the rope." And even as he was speaking, he was just below her, and her trembling hand had clasped his upstretched to it.

"Oh, Ned, you always come at the right minute," she said gratefully. And Dalkeith following on swiftly now, overheard her.

"I noticed you had been looking out to sea too much," answered Longley in a matter-of-fact tone. "Don't do it again. I can't get up beside you until the rocks of this ledge lift a bit as they do soon. Then with Lord Dalkeith behind you and me before, you'll not think of danger."

"I don't think of it now," she answered him. And the three went on until they joined the others from the steamer. No one had witnessed the momentary

scene between the two young men. Those in the cave did not come out until afterward; and Dorothy never knew of it. Who was to tell her? Not Dalkeith; and certainly not Ned. But she realized once again, as she had done many times before, that Ned had a way of being on hand when one needed him.

As they passed the wishing chair again, she said to him. "One of my wishes, Ned, was that your mother might be quite well again."

"Wouldn't you like a view from the top, Miss Brooke?" asked Dalkeith pressing forward. "The stairs are safe; and I will be sure to hold you firmly."

"Thank you very much," answered the girl. "I would like it. But I am ashamed of myself; I've turned a coward to-day."

She was unusually silent during the visit to Iona with its ruins of the old cathedral and of the ancient nunnery, and its graves of the ancient kings.

That night when she wrote to her mother, she paused long from her letter, recalling her sensations of fear as she had stood trembling on the rocks of Staffa, and her relief at Ned's voice and hand bringing her back to safety. But she did not tell her mother of this incident. After all, it had been so short; and then, it would make the dear one uneasy as to what other dangers might come to her child.

"YOU'RE NOT GOING TO FALL; YOU'RE ALL RIGHT."

XXIV

VERY FASCINATING

"Wasn't it good, Annie, that I didn't leave my furs behind?" cried Sara Osborne as the party on an excursion from Oban, sailed through the beautiful waters of Loch Awe. "I should have done it but for you, you wise woman. But furs in August—think of it!" She shivered ostentatiously and drew her cape more closely.

"You can't tell whether the tears in your eyes come from the beauty of the scenery, or the nip of the air," returned Dorothy. "We don't have to carry a thermometer to remind us of the nearness of the Arctic Circle. But then the trip is worth it; and I suspect my tears are more from sentiment than from the nips of Jack Frost."

By those accustomed to the climate it was considered a fine day. It rained only every little while, and only for a short time together; and as Priscy remarked, it might so easily have rained all the time; the difficuty with the sky seemed to be not to rain.

"Do go and talk to some of the others," said Mrs. Bridges to her son; and you go too, Miss Longley. Mr. Longley will entertain me for a little while, I know."

"Oh, to be sure I will, if I know how, Mrs. Bridges," acquiesced Ned who had counted upon mak-

ing a few notes for an article that he must send to Mr. Harris, and had collected them at the back of his brain, from which place he feared they would scatter before he could nail them to paper, if he did not manage to do this soon. Mrs. Bridges was enraptured with the scenery, but her raptures were never silent. Ned, however, resigned himself to the inevitable, and the lady declared later to Grace that her brother was a most delightful "*compagnon de voyage.*"

The young people seemed unusually gay, and Colonel Pell enjoyed the merry war of wits and did his part toward keeping it up. Longley and Dalkeith avoided each other as much as they could without making such avoidance observed, and talked, as if unconsciously, across one another to the other members of the party. On these excursions the conversation was for the most part general, or broken rather into groups than duets. Mrs. Pell looked on approvingly, and often added her bright word with effect. For she liked fun of the right kind.

Dalkeith was drawn to Bridges whose cleverness he enjoyed. Standing beside him that day, alone as it chanced for the moment, he said, "She is certainly very fascinating."

"To which one do you refer?" questioned the latter, his amused eyes surveying the five girls who, all in range of his companion's vision, were at the moment eagerly debating some subject with Colonel Pell and Lord Hervey. "I'll agree as to any one you pitch upon," he added.

Dalkeith laughed. "You've hit it," he said.

"Those countrywomen of yours are all very fascinating. How have you managed to keep out of the matrimonial knot so long?" he went on with a quizzical glance at Bridges.

"It is odd, really," retorted the other. "It shows what a hard-hearted fellow I am." In fact, Bridges' manner to Dorothy was so unembarrassed and friendly, so like one out of the race, as he knew himself to be, that the speaker had no idea of the truth, or he would have forborne his jest.

"I do mean them all," he assented. "But when I spoke, I was thinking of the new arrival, Miss Osborne. She's never at a loss for a word."

"N—o," drawled Bridges. "She's quite up to date, that's a fact." And he threw a keen glance at Dalkeith whose surrender to Dorothy's charm had been evident to him. A defection, he wondered? But the other had no such idea. His admiration for Miss Osborne, although it was genuine and he did not hesitate to show it, did not go so far. For all Dalkeith, Bridges was welcome to amuse himself with the girl's wit, and to reply to it, as he often did, with a keenness that won him her attention.

It was as one of the circle, throwing in an occasional word, and always aptly, that Grace Longley perceived and approved Mr. Bridges' attitude to Dorothy, and while pitying him, admired his self-control. He saw that in many ways Grace tried to spare him sharp contacts that she believed would hurt him. He appreciated her kindness, and repaid it by standing between her and Mrs. Bridges' impositions. How clever Grace

was, for all her gentle ways, he said to himself. How unobtrusively, and often successfully, she stood between his mother and the exploitation of some of her absurdities. He told himself that she was quite the equal of any one, titled or not, quite as much of a lady as Lady Griselda, more refined than Sara Osborne, and perhaps as sympathetic as Dorothy. Nobody could go beyond Dorothy; no, nobody could go beyond Dorothy, he repeated to himself; yet he was not sure that the "little brick" did not come up to her in sympathy. He was to be pitied on account of Dorothy; nothing was more true. And yet he realized that even the loss of her had not quite lost the world to him. Life still had its enjoyments. And while watching Grace, he amused himself with Sara Osborne's gayety, until one day this suggestion as to something of life being still left to him, and that something, possibly, being Miss Osborne, suddenly occurred to Miss Longley. Dorothy Brooke, and Sara Osborne! The step from one to the other seemed to Grace immeasurable. Yet if Dorothy were impossible? Things happened so strangely. She turned cold. She realized how much harder life with Mrs. Bridges would be without that protection from her whims which the girl had come to perceive the son afforded her. She had not considered before what a change there would be in the household if his bright words and kind ways were not there.

That morning on the boat Mrs. Bridges with Ned in attendance, sauntered up to the group.

"Now, Mr. Longley," she said to him, "go and

enjoy yourself with the young people." As with a bow and courteous word he left her at a summons from Lady Griselda to help them settle a disputed point which appeared to be involving them all, Mrs. Bridges laid her hand on her son's arm. "Bring Miss Longley to me now, Charley," she said. "Then I sha'n't feel out of things. I don't with her; she has such a way of taking in everything."

He glanced across at Grace listening to some drollery of Dorothy's and watching Ned who was approaching.

"She's very well off where she is, mamma," he answered with decision. "Let her alone, and content yourself with me. You are in the charmed circle now. But don't say anything just yet; they're in the middle of a discussion, and you've not heard the opening of it. Just listen."

His mother obeyed. And later, when she entered into conversation, as she needs must, being Mrs. Bridges, Mrs. Pell strove hard to remember what her husband had assured her, that Mrs. Bridges had the same rights upon the boat as herself; and that there was some fun to be got out of her peculiarities, if one would not take her seriously. But Mrs. Pell did not enjoy the peculiarities, nor the kind of fun.

On the early morning of the day before they were to leave Oban, Colonel Pell having read his mail with muttered exclamations, came to Longley.

"My dear fellow," he began with a troubled face, "I have a very great favor to ask of you."

"That is quite new, Colonel Pell," returned Ned. "You've always been the one to bestow favors. I shall be so happy if there is anything I can do for you."

"I hate to ask it, for it may put you out," said the other. "But I think I must, since you are so kind."

The following day when they all sailed up the Caledonian Canal, there had been made temporarily a change of arrangement. Colonel Pell had been summoned to London, perhaps further, and at his earnest request Longley was conducting his party. Ned had decided to shorten his vacation and had engaged passage for home, and was to have sailed on the very day after that on which he was now going through the Canal with the others. He had talked over the matter with Grace and Dorothy and had felt that both Mrs. Longley's children ought not to be longer the width of the ocean away from her. But he had said nothing to the others, not even to Colonel Pell, of his reason for going. When at the latter's request he suddenly remained, because there was nobody else, it being impossible to ask the two strangers, and Bridges being opposed by Mrs. Pell, the reason for this change of plan was differently read by at least two of those who accompanied him, Lord Hervey who believed him in pursuit of his sister, and Lady Griselda herself who was of the same opinion. Dorothy confided laughingly to Grace that it would not have done to take Lord Delkeith, it would make him feel too important; and Charley Bridges would not suit Mrs. Pell, because his mother would make herself more con-

spicuous than ever. "You see, we have to fall back on Ned," she said. "And he's a good support."

Longley knew he could get home in some way if the steamers were crowded; and Colonel Pell was to sell or exchange his ticket for him. But this change of plan would bring Longley more into contact with Lord Dalkeith. If only the latter would dislike him too much to come. But he would not, with Dorothy as kind to him as she was and as ready to give him her society, even at times devoting herself to him, Ned thought.

And yet this did happen, although not by Dalkeith's will. Hervey found him frowning over a telegram received just as he was about to go on board.

"Orders to right about to Dalkeith Palace, Hervey," he growled. "Grandmamma is afraid to stay alone —quite a new fear for her. It's all a ruse to get me away. I believe I'll not go. But then, I must. Where's Miss Brooke? On board, and they're just off. Explain to her for me, will you?"

"Of course. But where's the duke gone."

Dalkeith muttered something under his breath, and added that he neither knew, nor cared. Then Hervey swung aboard, and the other was left behind.

The day's journey was through a world of enchantment. The beauty of loch and hill and moor, the exquisite purple of the heather which had replaced the early glory of furze and broom, the ever-changing lights and shadows cast by sun and cloud and moon;

the mingling of ruggedness and softness in the landscape made a series of marvellous pictures. This highway is cut through the midst of Scotland where a series of canals and locks connecting lake with lake forms the wonderful Caledonian Canal, passing through Loch Lochy surrounded by its ruins of castles and its forests; Loch Oich bordered by sweeps of almost Alpine grandeur and dells of sylvan loveliness; Loch Ness bordered by forests of oak and fir, rich with underbrush and purple heather, while the silver loch mirrors the varying enchantment of sun and cloud.

And so the travelers came to Inverness, the far-famed and beautiful capital of the Highlands.

Early the following morning Lord Hervey carried off Longley and Bridges for a tramp over a country that he declared worth seeing. He lamented that they did not shoot; but they would still find enough to interest them. He did not invite the ladies who, uninvited, asserted that they were thankful to remain at home and rest.

That afternoon, however, before the return of the pedestrians, there entered the hotel drawing-room from its two doors, four persons. Was it pure accident? Or was it one of those accidents which it is known beforehand are going to happen? They advanced into the room in silence until they met and looked at one another. They were: Dorothy Brooke, Priscy Pell, Grace Longley, Sara Osborne. They walked to the sofa by one of the windows. Two seated themselves upon this sofa, two drew up chairs and sat facing the first two.

"Girls! girls!" cried Sara Osborne, "only count:

'Us four,
No more.'

School days over again—just as if we were at Hosmer Hall, in those precious minutes before study hours."

"Isn't it lovely?" said Grace. "How did it happen?"

"Well! We know Fate is very kind," said Dorothy. "But sometimes we are obliged to give her a gentle shove. Pell-Mell was on hand, and Sara always is; but I had to manipulate a wee bit for Grace. She's here though, and we'll hold her tight."

"Annie has gone to sleep; she's tired out. And I dare say Mrs. Pell has also. Mrs. Bridges is deep in a novel, Grace says—the best of depths for her," said Sara. "And now here are we."

Dorothy's eyes rested upon one and another of her companions, and there dawned one of her most pronounced smiles. Then it broke into a laugh.

"It's the most fascinating moment of the trip," she announced. Then still looking at her schoolmates, she added incisively, "Girls, we must do something—oh, something very mild, of course; perfectly innocuous." Her eyes were brilliant, and her smile had deepened until abounding fun was hidden in it. "Let us think of something very interesting—let us take a walk, an unchaperoned, unprotected walk!"

"And we'll all defend each other!" laughed Priscy as they trooped into the hall.

XXV

DIVERSE OPINIONS

"GIRLS, we're going out to buy some candy," announced Dorothy. "That is a perfectly legitimate errand. And you all remember the old proverb, 'The longest way round is the shortest way home.' I think we ought to be guided by that, don't you?"

Sara giggled; Priscy shook the speaker lightly; but Dorothy was grave as an oyster.

"I wonder if I ought to go?" questioned Grace, her sweet face clouding. "You see, Mrs. Bridges might want me for something; and you know, girls, that's my business."

"No; it's not your business this hour; it's your business the next hour," asserted Priscy pulling Grace's arm through hers and holding it firmly. "How long do you suppose it's going to take us to buy a little candy? Not much longer than it will take to eat it."

Dorothy bent a judicial look upon Pell-Mell's prisoner. "I think I'll run to your room and get your hat and coat and gloves for you, Graciosa. You might happen to catch your sleeve on a nail—the nail of Mrs. Bridges' whim—and be held; and we'd wait and wait for you, and you'd never come back. Do let me have your key; that's a good girl."

For a moment Grace still hesitated. But she was only nineteen, and had not outgrown the enjoyment

of a little fun with the girls she had missed so much. And then, Mrs. Bridges had said that she should not want her for an hour or two—if they would be back by that time. Of course, they would. Or she would. She handed the key to Dorothy who flew with it, but noiselessly.

"You'll wait here while we go for our duds?" asked Priscy. "Tell Dorothy we'll be back directly."

Four happier faces were seldom seen upon the streets of the old city. Dorothy had been longing irrepressibly to follow the route of her own sweet will, if only for a few hours. She was so fond of everybody and so grateful to everybody; and she could walk side by side with her friends—and even better sometimes ahead of them; to measure her walk step by step after those in front, to follow guide books and itineraries in which she had had no voice was all very fine, no doubt, and came out well. But she pined for a variety. She looked at her companions. She had it.

"We're all freshman at Hosmer Hall, going into town on Mrs. Claflin's permission," laughed Grace.

"Or the dear old professor's," said Dorothy. "Shouldn't I like to see him?"

"What! Here? You must be homesick. But he'd have to be guided, and we don't know the way ourselves yet. Suppose we ask?" suggested Sara as they went.

"Why not take a guide and be done with it, Sara?" retorted Priscy.

"Let's try first where we will come out," said

Dorothy. "Union street, Church street, and then the Town Hall with the fountain before it with the 'Clach-na-Cudden,' or cudain,' 'stone of the tubs' where they used to make all the public proclamations. Ah, now we're at Church street; we'll soon be there."

"Then when we've viewed the Town Hall, we'll get the candy," said Sara.

The girls laughed. They soon found and admired the handsome building; and then started in earnest on their quest. From the Town Hall they took their bearings and entering the street that seemed to promise the way to the shops and business, they went forward with confidence. They walked far, but did not find what they wanted. The tempting confections of their own land so lavishly displayed in the windows of every city there, were here emphasized by their absence.

"Oh, what an emblem of home a marshmallow, or a caramel, or a chocolate cream—or fudge would be!" sighed Priscy. "The few stores that we passed seemed to have nothing but a few varieties of drops in them; they looked more like cough drops than real candy. But we'll have to get something very soon. Dorothy has walked us so far, I'm desperately hungry."

"I think we'd better put our pride in our pockets, since we can't seem to get anything else there, and ask," suggested Grace.

In answer to this humiliation of their pride as explorers, they learned that what they should have looked for was not those foreign articles, "candy" and "confectionery," but "sweets." At last they found,

not the desired shop, but that which answered to it as nearly as the city could give them. Thus supplied with sweetmeats, although not of the kind they preferred, their spirits rose. As they walked on up the street, Dorothy said:

"Do you see that hill, there, on the right? The prison is there now and other buildings; but the castle of Macbeth used to stand on it. We shall have to take a nearer view."

"Of Macbeth's castle?" queried Priscy.

"Of the hill, you saucy Pell-Mell."

"It strikes me, Dorothy," said Sara, "that you must have been studying '*Baedeker*' yourself, for all you rail at it."

"Indeed, I don't rail at it; I just love it, when I do my own studying. But come, girls." And she led the way.

"She knows where she is; she has the points in her head," confided Sara in an aside to Grace who readily assented.

The four went on talking happily and enjoying every moment. From the hill they found their way to a narrow terrace path giving an extensive view of river and town. Then they declared that they must get down to the river bank. This accomplished, not without a little difficulty, they sauntered along this beautiful walk watching the Ness, its sparkling, hurrying waters here and there broken into rapids as it rushed on to the Firth. But here Grace who had been silent for a while, said, "Don't you think it's time to go home, Dorothy, and all of you?"

"Very soon, Grace," answered Dorothy. "But we must come to the islands in a few minutes. We shall be so glad to have found these all by ourselves; I've read that they are perfectly beautiful. The river dances around them and sings as it goes. They can't be more than ten minutes away, I should think."

Chatter gave place to silence as the four walked on, not ten minutes longer, but twenty, half an hour, until it was plain that the islands were much farther off than they had supposed, or else that they had taken the wrong direction. The latter was the case.

"I'm so tired, I can't go another step, and I won't," cried Priscy. "I should think we were ten miles at least from the hotel. We must have a carriage."

They all halted and looked about them. Grace was pale and much troubled; but she said nothing. It was Sara who asked, "Just tell us where we are, Dorothy."

"I've not the least idea," answered Dorothy.

"We thought you knew all about it from your book, didn't we, Grace? You talked as if you did."

The cloud settled on Dorothy's brow. "I'd not the least idea you thought so," she said. "I thought we all understood it was an exploring expedition. I always took it so."

"Evidently. Then we're lost?" And Sara looked both frightened and severe.

"Yes," returned Dorothy.

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Why, find ourselves, of course."

"That's Dorothy to the backbone!" cried Priscy,

patting the other's shoulder encouragingly. "Of course we will. Cheer up, birdie."

"I'm not down, Pell-Mell. I didn't mean it, certainly. I didn't dream you took me as a well-informed person. But, then, you know, we'll get out of it all right. And then, it will be part of the fun."

"How could you expect to go with Dorothy and not have something happen?" asked Grace smiling. This was not the time to be anxious and make it harder for the dear child. Then, if Mr. Bridges had come home, he would console his mother. If not—

"We shall have to ask somebody," she added.

"Then you'll have to appeal to the water nymphs; there's nobody in this place to ask."

As Sara Osborne said this, the girls looked about them with more attention than they had yet bestowed upon their present position. The sun had set; but the sky was still bright with its radiance, daylight had not begun to fade. The river was golden from the sky above it; grass and trees were brightened by the sunset glow; and beneath the gleaming horizon shone distant hill tops, while purple shadows marked the dusk below. Everywhere, beauty, peace, charm. But in sight no human being. To what part of the river could they have wandered to find such solitude?

Grace ought to have been at home before this time. The thought troubled Dorothy. But there was no danger here. How could there be? And yet night was coming, for the longest of the summer twilights of that latitude had gone by. And it was so lonely; she wished it was not so solitary. It was, surely, very

unpleasant; and—yes, it might soon grow dangerous; it would, if they were here at night. She wished that she had some idea where they were. It was at this point in her meditations that Sara repeated Dorothy's thought. For having looked about her in all directions, she turned to her companions.

"There's not a creature in sight!" she exclaimed dolefully. "What *shall* we do?"

Her words and her tone braced Dorothy who had never been ready to despair.

"Do!" she cried. "Why, go home, of course. We must go back the way we came, since we don't know any shorter way."

But then it transpired that they did not even know this one. They had taken so many turns, and been so occupied with the scenery and their own talk, that now each girl had a different opinion of the direction in which they should go. In this exigency Grace who was thinking that Mrs. Bridges might not want a companion who could do such a thing as this, yet held her head erect and gazed as cheerfully as she could at her friend who needed all the encouragement that could be given her; Sara surreptitiously wiped away a tear; Priscy scanned every point of the landscape with the conclusion that there were times when pictures of still life were more desirable than the reality; and Dorothy stood thinking hard. She had declared herself tired of having to follow, and fate had played her the trick of giving her the leadership. She accepted the challenge.

"Why, girls," she said with decision, "we have a

guide. One thing is sure; the river runs through the town, we have seen that for ourselves. So, we are not lost, after all. We have only to follow the river in the right direction—I'm afraid we've been taking the wrong—and we shall certainly come out at the city street."

"When?" asked Sara.

This was the very question Dorothy had been asking herself. "Could it be before dark?" But she answered promptly, and more cheerfully than the outlook warranted:

"Oh, Sara, it will be when we get there." She confessed to herself that she was tired already, and she was the best walker of the four. But there was no help for it, and the braver they were, the better for them all. "Since we've been going the wrong way, here's for the right one," she added. "Right about face and follow the leader. I'm awfully sorry, girls, but this is the only way out that I can see; and it certainly is a way. Truly, we are not lost; and we'll be back again sooner than you think."

"My feet must be inflamed," sighed Priscy as she hobbled after Dorothy who had now started resolutely on the return path. "But if they are, we shall have to get to the town, if we can, before it grows quite dark. Mamma will say I did it all because papa wasn't here."

"I do think it's a pretty mean thing to do to Ned," said Dorothy. "But he will know we didn't intend it."

They had gone on nearly a quarter of a mile, and the consciousness of doing something to help them-

selves had raised their flagging spirits, although it could not quicken as much as they desired their flagging steps, when Sara said again with a sigh:

"I never saw such loneliness. We must be a long distance from town. There's not a creature in sight yet."

The words had scarcely been uttered when a great dog came rushing past her. But he paused to sniff at Dorothy who was in advance.

"There! Sara," she cried, "here's one creature in sight." She stooped and patted him. "Oh, you beauty!" she said. "Isn't he handsome, girls?" And she caressed the beautiful head of the setter as his brown eyes looked up into her own. "And so you've come to point the way, dear old fellow. You're going into town, I'm sure. So are we. And you show us that we are on the right road. Don't you see, girls?"

She turned to speak to those behind. And as she turned, she found herself looking at the dog's owner coming up hurriedly. And as she looked, her face flushed and brightened. The others watched her in amazement; and they, too, turned to look at the stranger.

"Why, Miss Brooke!" he said holding out his hand as he came up to her. "It seems very natural, and most delightful," he added, "to meet you at the water's edge. There was our first meeting, you remember?"

"Your Grace!" said Dorothy laying her hand in his. "It would always be good to see you. But now—it is especially good," she finished with an expressive glance at the place and the darkening sky.

"Yes, I see," he answered smilingly as, having greeted Priscy and acknowledged with a few courteous words his introduction to the two strangers, he turned back to Dorothy. "A little walk, all of your own choosing, Una, is it not? I remember you like those. I understand exactly how it happened; the views and the company, and perhaps the point that seemed just beyond. And then, all at once, the river appeared to be in the wrong place? And there was too much of it—for the hour? Yes, I see." And his smile deepened.

"Indeed, you do see," returned the girl smiling back. "And you see, too, that we are going into the city again at once. We are on the road now." By an effort she kept the interrogation out of her tones in the last sentence. He noticed this, however, and was the more amused. "But since you—I mean, your Grace remembers Bournemouth days, you remember, I hope, that I was always ready to take suggestions as to routes when they were made by one who knew them best?"

"And when they accorded with Una's wishes," he retorted, this time laughing outright.

She met him in the same spirit. "And your short cuts, your Grace, cut off many a tedious circuit and gave us all the beauties of the way." Then she added gravely: "We came to Inverness only yesterday; we know nothing of the place. But if you can direct us to a short cut to the town, we shall be very grateful. We've been tramping a good while; and then, it's getting dark. When we get to the streets again, I think we can find a carriage."

"If you will permit me, I shall be as pleased to show you the short cuts here as in Bouremouth," he answered her. "Why, ladies," he said in answer to their fear of giving him trouble, "you are not inconveniencing me. I am delighted to go with you on the very path that I was about to take with Bounder as my only companion. We will have a carriage in five minutes; and in another ten you will all be at home."

As he turned off from the path they were treading, Sara asked him, "We were going to the town, but by a longer way, were we not?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Osborne," he assured her, "you were on the right road; but it was a long one. This strikes the town higher up."

When they reached the hotel, the young men had returned only shortly before, and found Mrs. Pell, Mrs. Haven and Mrs. Bridges each agitated after her own manner by the information that the young ladies had been seen to leave the hotel together four hours ago, and had not returned. The young men held a consultation as to the different routes by which to search for them. Ned had already chosen his, and was coming down the steps accompanied by one of the hotel guides, when the carriage drove up.

The story of the afternoon was listened to with interest. But the best of the comments upon it were made later by members of the quartette, in Dorothy's room.

"Really, Dorothy, the duke is your mascot," declared Priscy. "What would mamma have said to us if anybody but he had brought us home?"

"Or if we had come by ourselves, as we should otherwise, Pell-Mell."

"Oh, yes—eventually," interposed Sara.

"But now everything is serene," remarked Grace rejoicingly.

"Conundrum," exclaimed Sara. "Why is Dorothy Brooke like a cat? Answer, Because she always falls on her feet."

"How horrid in you, Sara! And it's not so. Poor Dorothy has had a great many tumbles," cried Priscy indignantly.

"But I've always got up again, haven't I, Pell-Mell?" inquired Dorothy tranquilly. "And then, you needn't mind. I'm fond of cats, like the Egyptians, the wisest of the ancients. But as to the duke, I confess that his short cut was very welcome. But remember, he said we were in the right path. If he had not appeared, we should have come back here—in time, to be sure. We were not lost, you see, even without a chaperon."

"But we were mighty glad to have a protector turn up," declared Sara.

Dorothy laughed.

XXVI

LONGLEY REPLIES

The duke had come from Forres to Inverness. On his bringing home Dorothy and her friends, he spent half an hour with Mrs. Pell, Lord Hervey, and the others whom he knew. He reminded her of the promised visit to him at his Edinburgh home, and regretted not seeing Colonel Pell now, but looked forward to meeting him there. The following day he went to Aberdeen on his way home.

After a week at Inverness, filled with excursions to the various places of interest in the vicinity, the travelers journeyed southward by the West Highland Railway passing through the heather-covered hills, over mountain streams, through mountain passes, the famous Pass of Killiecrankie being one of these. When they changed trains at Perth on their way to Stirling, Lord Dalkeith joined them, to the surprise of every one except Lord Hervey who had kept his own counsel at Dalkeith's request.

All that visitors were permitted to see in the historic Castle of Stirling interested them deeply. The statue of Robert Bruce, the Abbey Craig with its Wallace Monument, the battle field of Bannockburn, and other famous places were viewed with enthusiasm. There was so much to be revered and to excite the pride of the beholders in the history of Great Britain shared

by Americans, that the evidences of certain ancient customs still existing brought regret to the observers.

It was in the old churchyard at Stirling, standing beside the grave of Henry Drummond and remembering his wonderful presentment of "The Greatest Thing in the World", that Dorothy voiced an indignation which had seized her at what she had seen in the church which they had but then quitted.

"A church divided into two parts, one for the rich, one for the poor!" she said looking at Lord Dalkeith. "Do they think that God, too, prefers the rich to the poor?"

"Perhaps they think the other way, and leave it to the Lord to take care of the poor while they themselves see to it that the rich are made comfortable," suggested Ned as he joined her. And he also looked at Dalkeith.

"That is a very old church," retorted the latter, nettled. "And that division is as old as the church. You've not seen it elsewhere, Miss Brooke?" He addressed himself especially to her.

"I am glad to say I have not. But I remember one church where the pews devoted to the rich people were many and comparatively empty, and those for the poor were few, and so crowded there was scarcely room to sit down. Yet none of the great people were willing to share any space, even with one another, to give more room."

"Why, of course not," said Dalkeith emphatically. "You don't understand, Miss Brooke. But that is natural."

"They are not of your mind, Dorothy, about sharing rooms and privileges," remarked Priscy pointedly.

Dorothy colored at this reference to her own sharing of her room with the untutored Pell-Mell at her arrival at school years ago. The subject was not pursued. But Dalkeith secretly resented her remarks; and Dorothy received an impression not readily effaced, particularly as other things, trifles in themselves, served to show her still more plainly how Dalkeith, and probably others of his class considered people below them in rank.

"This must end!" exclaimed Mrs. Pell, looking from one to the other of her auditors.

Dorothy pressed her lips together, while Priscy answered:

"Tell me, mamma, how you are going to keep her from coming to the same hotel we do, if she pays her hotel bills?" She waited a moment and then added: "For my part, I think she is rare fun sometimes. Now when we were ready to mourn over the ruins of some great work, or the fall of some noble man, Mrs. Bridges would air her historical knowledge until instead of trying to keep the tears out of our eyes, we would have to iron out our faces to keep from smiling, and sometimes think of something dreadfully sad, so that we shouldn't snicker. Nobody will think she is your dearest friend. What makes you care?"

"At any rate there is one place she cannot follow us to, and that is, the duke's," returned Mrs. Pell with an accent of relief. "Your papa counts upon being with

us that day, Priscilla. I heard from him this morning."

"To be sure, he will. He must," said the girl.

Not even Mrs. Pell herself prayed with such earnestness for his speedy return as did Ned Longley. It was not on account of his mother, for he had received good news from her on the very day that Colonel Pell left for London. But if the latter did not return in season, Ned would be compelled to go to this dinner as escort. He had been invited, although not of the Canterbury party. But after Dalkeith's speech to him at Staffa and the manner in which Dorothy was receiving the fellow's attentions, he would rather be a thousand miles away on that day. It seemed to him that the nobleman was making strides into her favor.

Ned did not attempt to divert her. But he accepted Lady Griselda's evident pleasure in his society as a diversion to himself; at least it kept him from displaying megrims in public. It was splendid in her to devote so large a part of her fortune to a memorial of her brother which would be a blessing to many persons, and he told her so. He was very friendly with her, for she was interesting, sometimes charming; but he was not loverlike. Yet it had come to seem even to Dorothy at times that he might be laying the foundation for this; and the thought suggested to her that she must not allow Ned to think her memory longer than his own.

Lord Hervey watched with increasing annoyance and anxiety his sister's predilection for the impecunious

American. To bestow her money upon him would be worse than putting it into a hospital; and there it would never go, however much Longley lauded her purpose, if he could get it. It was easy to say to himself that he would speak to Longley; but how was he to do it? They had all been going about a good deal in Edinburgh, sightseeing and enjoying themselves; and a word in private was not easy, if one wanted it to appear a happening.

One day Lady Griselda who was visiting friends in Edinburgh had been out with Dorothy and Priscy, and returning with them to the hotel, came into the drawing-room to finish her chat with them. But her brother came, then other acquaintances; and at last she and Longley were having a merry time together; Hervey thought they were more devoted than ever.

"But I must really go," she cried at last, and rose to make her farewells.

"And if you go, what shall I do?" asked Ned laughingly as he rose also.

"Oh, you may come and put me into the motor-car," she answered over her shoulder, as she turned to Priscy and the others.

It was when he had done this, and was idly watching her out of sight, that some one at his elbow said,

"You are not the first to look after my sister with interest."

Ned turned. "I don't see how any one who knows her could do otherwise, Lord Hervey. You may be proud of your sister."

"I am," returned the other shortly; and paused. It was mighty hard, he said to himself, to talk to a fellow about a thing he didn't seem to have on his mind. This American appeared as innocent of being out of place as Hervey himself; indeed, it seemed to the latter at the moment, rather more so. It was evident he could not walk into an explanation; he must plunge into it.

"She is very kind to you, Longley," he said. "But you must remember," he added brusquely, "there is a condescension in her kindness."

"There is in every woman's kindness to any man," answered Ned suavely, smilingly, yet with unflinching eyes upon his opponent.

"Yes, because they're so much above us," cried Hervey hotly, in his annoyance that the other would not seem to understand what he must know perfectly well. "But you force me to be plain. With you there is in addition the social difference."

"You mean because I have no money, and because I write advertisements for Mr. Bridges?" questioned Ned coolly. "I don't see how those facts force you to anything. What have they to do with it?" And now he was so unmistakably amused that his hearer was seized with sudden fear lest the matter had already gone beyond him.

"What have they to do with your marrying my sister?" he gasped. "Really!" He stopped from lack of power to meet the occasion strongly enough.

"That's a question wholly of your own putting," answered the other.

"The question of wooing is not of my putting at all," cried Hervey. "You know that."

Longley eyed the speaker with a haughtiness the latter could not equal. Then he laughed, although his color rose. It was impossible to retort that whatever wooing there had been had come from her.

"Lady Griselda is only amusing herself," he said. "So am I. She understands perfectly. So do I." Haughtiness and scorn were still in his amusement.

Hervey as he stared at him, recalled a hint of his story that Miss Pell, or Miss Brooke, had given him, a reference to Ned's devotion to mother and sister. He flushed. For Hervey was a good fellow, in spite of prejudices; honorable and easily moved to generosity. But as his anxiety was relaxing, there came to him a new significance in the words, "She understands perfectly". What did Griselda understand? Something of his thought must have expressed itself in his face, for, still with his scornful lightness, Longley added:

"Do not disturb yourself, Lord Hervey. I have no intention of disturbing you." Then he went into the hotel again, while Hervey, divided between regret and suspicion, looked after him.

"Oh, if only Colonel Pell would return!" thought Ned. He carried off Grace for a walk, and in her soothing presence forgot at least a part of his annoyances. What a pity Hervey did not know how much more Ned cared for his own sister than for his. But the thought recalled that the investment he had made for his mother and Grace would not go up appreciably, and more than once had threatened a disastrous fall.

Yet in some way his sister must be freed from the beck and call of Mrs. Bridges.

He, marry! And if he could, would it be Lady Griselda? His amusement at this suggestion was not feigned.

XXVII

A MEMORABLE VISIT

All would be well. Colonel Pell was to return that day in time for the dinner. Ned could have danced for joy. He would have gone as a substitute, for it would have been impossible to leave the ladies without an escort. Under other circumstances he would have been very glad to see the home life of a Scottish nobleman. Lord Dalkeith in spite of his faults was a gentleman; he had recognized how Longley was placed, and how he would suffer in being thus compelled to go as a guest to the home of a man who had insulted him; and he had apologized as well as he was able to Longley for the words at Staffa. But to stay at home was a pleasure to Ned; for his acceptance had been only as a substitute.

Colonel Pell, however, did not arrive by the expected train. There was but one other by which he could come, and that would make him somewhat late, since the duke's motor-car would be at the door for the guests at the very time that the train was due; and Colonel Pell would have to dress. But a message was left for him to follow according to the request of his hosts, and Ned started with the others as fate had decided.

Mrs. Bridges from the window of her room peered

out at the departing motor-car. For the united efforts of Grace and Charley Bridges had been successful in preventing her from going down to the hotel steps to see them off.

"I don't see why not, Charley," she had insisted. "If I'm not swell enough to dine with dukes, I'm at least good enough to speak to my friends in the presence of the chauffeur. But since you and Miss Longley consider it the part of dignity to keep one's self in the background, I'll do it. But then, my dear," she added turning to Grace, "if you stay in the background, who is to see your dignity?"

The drive which swept about a part of Arthur's Seat with its stretch of country gleaming in the brilliant moonlight, the old palace from which stretched out the beautiful landscape in the same clear brilliancy, Mrs. Pell declared to be more fascinating than it had been by sunlight the day that they had returned the visit of Buccleugh and the duchess. She put aside her secret annoyance at her husband's want of promptitude, and prepared to enjoy herself to the utmost, and to be as agreeable as she knew how; and she was well versed in social forms.

Their hosts were cordial. The duke as he held Dorothy's hand and looked down smilingly into her eyes, told her that he was glad to see her again, even if this time it were neither by sea, or river, and asked her if at home he reminded her of her comrade of Bournemouth?

"No, you do not remind me of him, you are he," returned the girl, the smile in her eyes overflowing to

her lips. "And I am very glad to see you, my lord duke."

He laughed. "Excellent for an American tongue, Miss Brooke," he replied. And the next moment he said to her in an amused aside: "Did you find it in Scott? Our family name is Scott."

"Oh, I know," cried Dorothy thoroughly interested. "And are you a relative, even ever so distant, of Sir Walter? I should be proud of that if I were you." Then she caught herself back, coloring deeply. "I forget," she said. "It is he who should be proud in that case. And, truly, one ought to be proud of any relationship with a family whose ancestors have done for their country what the Dukes of Buccleugh have done."

"Thank you," he said; and then stood looking at her in silence. Here was a beautiful girl, for she had never looked more so; very charming, and he believed very good; clever also; she would not be at a loss what to say or do in any position. Before that day he had guessed at rather than been assured of his grandson's admiration for her; but now he read it in the young man's eyes. Her lack of great wealth was no vital objection, although he held great wealth to be desirable. But the old plans still held him; he desired that they should hold for Dalkeith also. He glanced at Lady Griselda who while lacking the beauty of either of the two young Americans, was looking extremely well that evening. Although she was small and slight, the dignity of race showed in her, and she had a grace all her own, thought the interested observer. As he

watched her she was talking with animation to Ned Longley who, much as he had dreaded coming, now that he was in for it, appeared to be enjoying himself thoroughly. So far from being deterred by Lord Hervey's admonition, he paid more than usual attention that evening to Hervey's sister. A single glance of trouble, or annoyance at the two, which passed, before it had been observed, into a smile at Hervey's devotion to the fascinating Miss Pell, and the duke carried the party out upon the terrace for the view before the moon should be too low to show it at its best.

There were more guests, some staying in the house, others from the neighborhood. When the duchess expressed her disappointment at Colonel Pell's abscence and asked at what time he could be with them, Mrs. Pell assured her that nothing but important business for the Government could have delayed him on an occasion to which he had looked forward with so much pleasure, and entreated the duchess not to have the dinner put off for a moment.

"Telephone to the hotel, and see if he has arrived there yet?" commanded the duke. When the footman returned with his message which he delivered inaudibly to the rest of the company, the host's face darkened. Mrs. Pell who noticed it, believed that he was annoyed at her husband's absence, especially as he turned to her this same darkened face and asked her once more if she were sure that Colonel Pell was to come by that train? Receiving her assurance, he spoke a word in an aside to the duchess who started,

and looked distressed. Then she recovered herself, and directly, dinner was announced.

Although this progressed with apparent smoothness, Longley felt that under it something was wrong, and that this something concerned themselves. Yet the duke must be too familiar with the exigencies of Government service to take Colonel Pell's absence amiss. But before the dinner ended, a gloom which effort could not completely hide seemed to brood over the hosts, and to extend to Lord Hervey, sedulously as he endeavored to exhibit his accustomed gayety. When the ladies left the table, the depression seemed to vanish in the drawing-room, thanks to the skill of the hostess whose face yet showed an anxiety that her tones did not betray. She moved among the guests with many a gay word. But she devoted herself especially to Mrs. Pell, and it seemed as if a solicitude were in her tones.

Yet in spite of all attemps at ease an oppression was evident to Longley; and as the evening wore on the sense of something impending diffused itself through the room and impressed him still more. It added to the effect that through the talk and laughter around him, and his own as well, for he struggled against his impression, he heard from time to time the distant ring of the telephone. Had the girls noticed anything? Both had disappeared. Hervey was escorting Priscy through the suite of rooms ending in the conservatory, and Dalkeith had excused himself long enough from his duties as host to take Dorothy through the picture galleries where she found the por-

traits of the family from centuries back, and into the immense library filled with books among which she would have liked to browse for days.

It was while they were here that the duke entered accompanied by Longley. The girl's first thought was that this was the place for Ned. But directly she perceived that looking at the precious volumes here was not the errand upon which his host had brought him. To be sure, he had said to him in the drawing-room, "I want you to see some of the old books." But he had added in an undertone, "And I have something to tell you."

Ned had been sure of it.

Buccleugh seeing Dorothy, hesitated. Then he said, as if to himself, "But she must know it also; there is no holding it back." And as she and Dalkeith came up to him, he added, "There has been a frightful accident on the train by which Colonel Pell was to have come to us."

"A frightful accident!" How it brought back to Ned and Dorothy that night at the theatre when news had come of the death of Ned's father, and the perhaps fatal injury to his mother. How kind Colonel Pell had been at that time. And then there came before Dorothy the remembrance of Priscy's agony the night that her father had made the balloon ascension.

"She will have to learn it," the duke was saying of Mrs. Pell. "And it seems to me kinder that she should hear it among friends than have the details thrust upon her unprepared, as she would have at the hotel."

"If Colonel Pell had been uninjured, or only slightly hurt, he would have telegraphed at once to relieve our fears," said Ned.

"So I believed, Mr. Longley," answered Buccleugh; "and I inquired before speaking to you. But no word has come from him." The speaker was watching Longley. He had an unaccountable confidence in this young man, and, unlike his grandson, had a liking for him.

"There must be a wrecking train," said Ned after a pause. "I'll take that, and get to the spot at once, as soon as Mrs. and Miss Pell and Miss Brooke are at home again."

"We will arrange that," said the duke; "if you have not the time, Dalkeith shall take them. Henry, make inquiries about a wrecking train, and let us know at once. Come back here," said his grandfather. The young man, nothing loth at this prospective duty, hurried to the telephone. He returned promptly with the announcement that the train would start very soon.

"The motor-car shall whirl you down to the station immediately," the duke said to Longley. "You've not time to return to the drawing-room. I will explain and make your adieus."

"Oh, where is Pell-Mell?" cried Dorothy as Ned disappeared with his host. Take me to her, Lord Dalkeith."

When the news was told her, Mrs. Pell insisted upon leaving at once; and the motor-car ordered for

Ned carried the ladies to their hotel, and then whirled him to the station.

The night that followed was never to be forgotten. "He would have sent word if he had not been killed," insisted Mrs. Pell.

It was a night frightful also to Longley who could find the man he sought nowhere among the wounded, nor recognize him among the dead. But in regard to the latter, there were a few among them who by reason of their wounds and the flames were unrecognizable, even as to clothing, and of these one was of the height and size of Colonel Pell. Yet Ned could not be sure. He would send no worse news than he must. He telegraphed, "Not found"; and waited for morning to confirm, or dispel his fears.

XXVIII

THE GIRL WHO SAVED HER FATHER

THE morning light brought to Ned no certainty of the truth. He was only not quite so sure of identity as he had been at night. There was nothing to be done but bring Mrs. Pell and Priscy. Leaving orders which would insure this inspection, the very thought of which crushed him, he returned to Edinburgh after having telegraphed to business quarters in London and received information that Colonel Pell had left for Edinburgh the previous evening.

Oppressed by the message he bore, he entered the hotel with downcast face and without looking at anyone was passing through the office, when a hand was laid upon his arm.

"Good-morning, Longley," said a familiar voice.

Ned started and looked up.

"Colonel Pell!" he cried, his voice hoarse with emotion. In silence the two clasped hands. "But why did you not telegraph?" he asked when the tenseness had a little relaxed.

"My telegram sent at eight o'clock last evening, arrived five minutes ago. You see," he added, "the business made me lose the first train, and the second by about two minutes. I took a motor-car and planned to intercept this train at the very station beyond that where the accident occurred. At this sta-

tion which I hoped to reach, the train had a wait of twenty minutes and then started on as an express. I found that I could cut across country in the motor-car, and by going at breakneck speed, I might hit the train, if I were not arrested first for speeding. It was worth trying. I tried it. I reached the station before the train, to be sure. Ah, Longley, you have been there; you saw! What a terrible scene! First I sent off my telegram here; and then I motored down there and did what I could. But I had left before the wrecking train arrived."

In the silence that followed, both thought of that ride they had taken together that winter night of the accident which in some ways had seemed to have wrecked Longley's life. But neither spoke of it.

"When did you get here?" asked Ned.

"Only an hour ago; or I should have tried to bring you back. You look seedy, Longley. Come and get some breakfast." And he drew him into the room.

The following week Dorothy gave to Olive and Harry the promised story of Grizel Hume, the brave girl who saved her father's life.

"Mr. Hume was upon the list of those to be arrested and tried for having taken part in, I think it was the last Stuart rebellion, 1745," she wrote. "Mr. Hume lived somewhere near Polworth Church in Berwickshire. I have seen that little church lonely and picturesque, its tower overgrown with ivy to the very top. In the church was the family vault of the Humes'; and it was in this that Mr. Hume hid; he

dared not go into the body of the church, or the tower, where men would search for him. But here among the dead Humes, who would think of looking? He dared not tell his wife where he was to be concealed; because, much as she loved him, he knew that if the officers who would come to arrest him should ask her where he was, she could not lie to them. So, he talked things all over with Grizel. She was his oldest child, a young girl of fifteen. If her mother did not know where Mr. Hume was hidden, the officers would not be likely to suppose that a child like her could tell them anything. But if they should ask her, she would do her best to puzzle them; she would not betray her father. I do not think they did ask her. They did not think a secret of life and death was behind her innocent little face.

But keeping the secret was only a small part of Grizel's duties. Her father could not come out of his hiding-place, and nobody but she knew where he was. If she did not take him food, he would starve to death. It was hard to conceal the food for him; for if she went about the house taking it from the pantries, the servants whether they saw her do it or not, would miss the food and suspect something wrong. Grizel would be watched and followed, and her father captured, tried and executed. She must manage better than that. She must secrete her own food for him. She used to slip pieces from her plate down into her lap when no one was looking. But her younger brother would laugh at her for eating so much. Grizel, however, was glad he thought this instead of

the truth. Perhaps her mother suspected her. But if she did, she was careful not to question her.

But even this was not the hardest part of Grizel's task. There was only one time when it was safe to carry this food to her father, and that was in the dead of night. In those days very many people believed in ghosts, and poor little Grizel was one of them. To slip down stairs in the dark was bad enough. But she dared not carry a light lest she should be discovered; and she must open the great front door without the least noise. She had oiled the hinges and the lock carefully. Then when she was out of doors, it was worse still to her; she had a walk of miles before her, and she felt as if the ghosts might be anywhere. But it was worst of all when she came to the churchyard and knew that they must be thick all about her. It is a great thing, though, to love more than one fears; and Grizel loved her father more than she feared the ghosts. So night after night through starlight and storm she went to him bringing him food, and whatever news she could gather as to how the search for him and others was going on. At last this search slackened. Then the friends of Mr. Hume, largely, I dare say, through his daughter's aid contrived to get him on board a vessel going to France; and there he and others who had escaped in various ways, remained, until, finally, they were pardoned, and could return to their own country. Then Mr. Hume came home to his family; and no doubt Grizel received love and praise for what she had done. She deserved them. This is no made-up story, you know; it is all

true. If I find other facts about Grizel, I will tell them to you when I come home. You don't know how much I have to tell you all when that day arrives."

By the previous mail Dorothy had written to her mother an account of the visit to Dalkeith Palace, "one of the duke's many castles," she had added. She gave an account of Colonel Pell's narrow escape; and of where and how the news of the train wreck had reached them. Then she returned to descriptions of some things seen at the palace, most of all the portraits and the books. She named two or three other homes owned by Buccleugh and alluded to some history of the family that she had been studying.

After Mrs. Brooke had finished reading the letter to her husband, she sat with it in her hand, looking at him questioningly. She saw from his face that he had something to say. At last he turned to her.

"It seems to me, Olivia," he said, "that our little girl is a good deal impressed by the ducal importance, not the mere magnificence by any means, but by the centuries of achievement and renown, more impressed than I have noticed before. How does it strike you?"

"Yes, I think so, too," said Mrs. Brooke. "But this has been her first opportunity to take in its significance." After a pause, she added: "Will this sway her decision, I wonder, should she be called upon to decide? I should like a look at Lord Dalkeith."

"It may be that you will have it, Olivia," he answered her.

XXIX

ABBEYS; AND A BORDER KEEP

"I PROMISED to tell you what places besides Abbotsford made me feel nearer to Sir Walter Scott than the monument at Edinburgh," wrote Dorothy to her younger brother and sister. "It was when I stood before his tomb in Dryburgh Abbey. To reach this we took a railroad journey and a short jaunt in open carriages; for there were seven of us, Colonel and Mrs. Pell, Lady Griselda and Lord Hervey, besides Ned and we girls. It was before Mrs. Bridges' party and Sara Osborne and her sister had joined us.

"When we left the carriages, we walked across a footbridge over the Tweed. At every step the planks seemed to rise to meet our feet, while through the cracks we caught glimpses of the water, and over the rails on either hand looked up and down the famous river, small in size to American eyes, but great in events of history and romance. 'I know you're trying to remember everything that ever happened here,' Priscy whispered to me. Some came without my trying. Scenes of history and legend rose up before me, as if the river were full of enchanted boats bearing these along. We have as beautiful scenery in our own country; but it's not quite the same thing. Here you come to understand how in Greece every tree had its dryad and every stream its naiad. For in Scotland,

as there, story, whether truth or legend, is everywhere anl clothes the landscape with its enchantment.

"From the footbridge we stepped upon an ideal country road; the trees arching overhead and the fields on either hand in the greenness and freshness of our early June. The day was warm, for Scotland. A mist was falling so fine and light, one could not call it rain; and every now and then the sky brightened as if it were about to clear. But Lord Hervey laughed, and told us it was only because we were Americans that we believed it would clear.

"We walked for half a mile. Then we passed through a gateway and entered the grounds of Dryburgh Abbey. At first our path ran by a wall covered thickly with English ivy. Then a turn led us past an old burying-ground. A very little further, and we stood before the Abbey—all that is left of it.

"But as we reached this spot, we turned to our right. For at the entrance, in St. Mary's Aisle, lies Sir Walter Scott in the burial vault of his ancestors. Besides him are his wife and John Lockhart. How Lockhart must have loved him to have written of him as he has done.

"While we were standing there, a man appeared as mysteriously as if he had sprung out of the earth—Ned said the fellow rose to a fee. The man was a good guide though, with not too many words, but with knowledge enough to make what we saw more interesting to us.

"In the chapter house, after we had written our names in the visitors' book, and had bought some of

the photographs and relics for sale there, we tried to find out how the monks felt sitting on the stone bench that runs the length of the room. At least, we found out how we felt! The seats were, naturally, as hard as a rock; but also they were so narrow I had fairly to cling to stay on. Those old monks certainly did have hardships. We saw the ruins of the refectory, their dining-hall, you know. They must have had some feasting to make up for their many fasts. I hope they did. And I hope that some day you both will see this Abbey, and all the other places you would enjoy so much. The walls of this old ruin are covered to their very top with ivy and with creepers from which wave streamers of green, like pennants, and everywhere masses of golden wall-flowers, all very beautiful.

"But it was not the ruin alone; it was the atmosphere of it, so in harmony with the scene, that made it all like a beautiful picture in a perfect setting. The soft mist with no chill and no darkening clouds, made a translucent veil through which one saw the past in its robes of mystery. The quiet, like the quiet of the dead past, but not its sadness, was so perfect that the birds like tame creatures fluttered around us; and when Ned broke a biscuit and scattered the crumbs to them, they gathered about him in a flock, as if human touch, and not the absence of human presence, had tamed them. I asked Ned where he got that biscuit? He looked wise, and said he stole it. Happily for him, he hadn't any more; for it would not be allowed. I asked him again; but I never found out.

"Melrose Abbey, wonderful as its carvings are, has no such charm of atmosphere. To me it seems still in the heart of the town of Melrose, although some of the buildings nearest the beautiful ruin have been taken away, or torn down. I don't know how it was before; but to me it still looks crowded.

"If I should write all day, I could not tell half the fascinations of Darnick Tower, one of the very few old border keeps left in the country. In old, old times it was a watch tower; for from the top men could see from a distance the coming of the army of the English in the days when war between England and Scotland was almost perpetual. As soon as the watchman perceived this army, a great fire was kindled on the very top of the tower from the boughs and brushwood dragged up the steep stone stairway and piled there to be always in readiness. When the people living in that region saw the signaling flames, then they gathered to the tower with their wives and children for protection. The men fought to defend the tower; and, no doubt, the women did whatever they could to help. Those were days when bows and arrows, and crossbows, and spears, and dirks and battleaxes were used by the soldiers, and great suits of heavy armor were worn by the knights. In the armory here is a suit of armor made by the famous Harry Gow about whom Scott writes in his novel, 'St. Valentine's Day'.

"We saw there, too, the famous Jedburgh caps and battleaxes; and a battleaxe said to have been used at the siege of Acre, the city that Richard I

helped to capture. We were told that Sir Walter Scott had tried to buy Darnick Tower for an armory."

Dorothy wrote also of the room there said to have been used by Mary, Queen of Scots; and of beautiful embroidery wrought by her skilful fingers. Of other things also she told them, so interesting that, between Olive and Harry, the letter was worn out by being carried and read to their friends; and when this misfortune happened, each insisted that the other had done it.

XXX

WALKING ON THE WALLS

"I SUPPOSE now the lords and ladies have deserted them, they will be glad to have our company again," asserted Mrs. Bridges with an air of injury. But this did not prevent her from making ready to resume her line of march in the same train with Dorothy Brooke's party, as she persisted in naming the group to whom she attached herself. She scoffed at her son's warnings that if Mrs. Pell should hear her, she would take mortal offence at the slight to her husband and herself. "I'm joining it on account of Miss Brooke; so it's that to me," she would assert.

"They have not deserted them, Mrs. Bridges," returned Grace that morning with decision. "I heard Lord Dalkeith tell Colonel Pell that he would see them again in London; and Lord Hervey may join them sooner. To be sure, Lady Griselda may not be of the party. She is visiting at Dalkeith Palace, I believe."

"A good place for her. I hope she'll stay there," retorted Mrs. Bridges with an air that made her son laugh outright and gave Grace an excuse to join in his mirth.

"There's that entertaining Miss Osborne who couldn't come with her sister to this hotel, because it was too expensive," pursued the speaker. "I

wanted to offer to pay her expenses here for the pleasure of her company, especially as the others would be absorbed by the nobility. But Miss Longley wouldn't allow me to do it. She holds me in rather tight sometimes; but I suppose she knows." And with a sigh the lady resumed her preparations for the train upon which she was to meet this new favorite of hers as well as "Dorothy's party".

The old city of York, the Eboracum of the Romans, the Yurewic of a still earlier date, once the capital of Britain, holding one of the oldest and most beautiful Gothic cathedrals in England, its city walls built by the ancient Britons, or the Roman settlers, its bars in past ages the guarded gateways in the massive towers upon these walls, its narrow streets and quaint houses, its air of antiquity and aristocracy, appealed to most of the party with a force that even more beautiful cities had failed to do.

"In which of these streets do you suppose Isaac of York lived in the days of Richard the Lion-hearted and Ivanhoe?" questioned Ned as he walked on with Grace and Dorothy, all looking about them with gaze determined to miss nothing which ought to be seen.

"Perhaps down there," laughed Dorothy pointing to a side street even more narrow and picturesque than the one they were traversing. "But at least we are sure it was somewhere here."

Mrs. Bridges declared, although under her breath, that she had "no use" for York. She thoroughly enjoyed the well-worn story of the traveler regretting to one of its citizens that the streets were so narrow

that two carriages could not pass each other in them; and the indignation of the citizen who retorted that indeed they could—just pass.

"Yes," she commented;" and they have to ring a bell when they are coming to a corner, lest they should run into the carriage just beyond it."

But she would go about everywhere; she was not to be left out in the cold. And in the Minster she was very quiet, being really impressed by its loftiness, its majesty and solemnity, and the marvels of its stained glass windows. And here even the irrepressible Sara held Priscy's arm and gazed in rapture.

"How beautiful! How wonderful!" she exclaimed under her breath. "I know now what it means to feel reverent."

The battlefield of Marston Moor, a few miles away, the Castle, Clifford's Tower, left unvisited the object most interesting to some of the travelers—the walls. As the young people started off for a tour of these, Mrs. Bridges remarked:

"Those two young fellows are having a fine time of it to-day; they have got the girls all to themselves; the rest of us have been sensible enough to stay at home."

Mrs. Pell at whom she looked took the remark stiffly. But her husband laughed and looked at Mrs. Haven who being somewhat of an invalid, had been too tired for the expedition. "I shouldn't wonder if you were right, Mrs. Bridges," he answered.

Ned had started with his sister and Dorothy;

Bridges had taken Priscy Pell, to Mrs. Bridges already pre-empted, and Miss Osborne with whom as his mother saw him, she felt a sudden desire that he might remain. The suggestion was new to her, and it seemed so satisfactory that at the first opportunity she imparted it to Charley. He looked at her with his shrewd smile, and replied that it was early yet for such plans; and advised her not to bring her fancy to the light of day, lest that should dissipate it. But she cherished it all the more for not speaking of it.

During the trip around the walls, Grace at a summons from Bridges to look at something which would interest his mother, joined him; and as they went on, Priscy fell back to Dorothy and Ned. These walls were an excellent illustration of the difference between ancient and modern warfare. At their best estate they could not have withstood one discharge of a cannon of to-day. In places they were narrow and on one side unprotected by parapet or railing. It was as those in advance were passing one of these difficult places, that something in Charley Bridges' attitude to Grace as he turned back to help her after having passed Miss Osborne across, caught Dorothy's attention.

"Look, Priscy," she whispered, as the two were a few steps behind Ned who was about to aid them in the same way. "Do you see? She's looking up to him with absolute confidence—and, now, hasn't he a proprietary air? It may all be because she is in one way in the family already."

"No, Dorothy, I don't believe it is. I agree with you."

"Oh, wouldn't it be fine, Pell-Mell? But don't ever breathe such a thought."

Priscy, her eyes dancing with mischief, turned to her. "If you don't want a thing told, why tell it yourself? You expect too much of your neighbor, to keep what you can't keep yourself, Dorothy Brooke."

"Not when my neighbor is Pell-Mell," answered Dorothy giving her a surreptitious squeeze. And then Ned turned back again, and the confidences were over for the time.

But although after this suggestion the girls were slyly watchful, they could neither prove nor disprove their suspicions. Bridges certainly was much amused by Sara Osborne's gayety and wit, and paid her a good many attentions, always in a frank and friendly way which he seemed willing that everybody should see.

"I think sometimes," said Dorothy one day speaking of these, "it is because she and her sister are traveling without a gentleman and he wants to make things nice for them; and sometimes, Pell-Mell—I don't! And then, as to Grace, perhaps he's only keeping the promise he made me about her when she went to Mrs. Bridges. He stands like a rock between her and his mother's tyrannies. Considering that Grace is so hardly placed, she comes off well."

"That is to say, considering she is so hardly placed, she's well placed," laughed her hearer.

Longley was to sail for home in a few days; and these few days in London would add still more to the work for Mr. Harris and the magazine which Ned had accomplished even more satisfactorily than had been expected. He had interviewed several writers of note from whom the editor had wished to secure contributions, but who were known to be difficult of access, and sometimes more difficult to pin down to pledges of any kind. The young man had won their good opinion, and their consent to the offers he had brought them, so that in place of tentative, he had been able to make absolute engagements with them for the magazine. He had also opened the way for an advantageous move by making the most of a favorable situation. It rested with the publishers to make this move if they chose; as they did.

Also, he had placed a few advertisements for Mr. Bridges, to the latter's great profit. Altogether, in a business aspect, his summer had been remarkably successful. In another aspect—but what had he expected from that other? He and Dorothy had really done some important work together on their new play. Would it be the last? In some ways she had been different since that evening at Dalkeith Palace. He could not prove this by word or look. Yet he felt it.

Lord Hervey was spending a few days with a former chum at Oxford who had been very ill and longed to see him.

Lord Dalkeith by request somewhat sternly made, was at home playing grandson to Lady Griselda's hosts, and being her more or less devoted cavalier.

He perceived that she missed Longley; he missed Dorothy horribly.

And he said to himself that nobody knew how it would turn out.

XXXI

A RISING ARTIST; AND SOME OTHER PEOPLE

FIVE girls sat in Dorothy's room in a London hotel, and on their faces shone the light-heartedness of school days.

"You see," explained Sara, "we can't by any means afford it; but we're doing it. Annie was for saving our money to take all the excursions we had planned to make with economy. But I said, 'Hang economy!'" Here the speaker looked around with a comical expression, as if to make sure of the sympathy of her listeners. "I said," she pursued, "that two weeks of sheer fun would make up for two months of poky relic hunting; I didn't care about having my mind informed, and I did care about having a good time. We would put up at the same places with you all and have plenty of fun, if we did get 'dead broke'. Then if ever you girls failed to amuse us, we could always fall back upon Mrs. Bridges; she is inexhaustible. So, here we are; and I'm glad of it."

"And we are still more glad!" cried Dorothy. "And if we get out of fun, we can always fall back upon Sara."

When the laugh had subsided, Grace laid her hand upon that of the girl next her.

"How good that you could come, Rose," she said.

"It would have been too bad to go home without seeing you, when you were so comparatively near.

"Well, I really couldn't come," answered Rose Hewes. "But then I would; and so I did."

"True!" cried Priscy.

"'When a woman will, she will,
You may depend on't;
And when she won't, she won't,
And there's an end on't.'"

"Why, Pell-Mell, where did you pick up that bit of wisdom?"

"Out of some of your old books probably, Dorothy. Anyway, a wise man said it."

"He must have learned it from experience," laughed the other.

Priscy looked about her. "Dorothy, Grace, Sara, Pell-Mell for Hosmer Hall," she said; "and Rose for the vacation—how good!"

"Rose dear, what are you painting now?" asked Dorothy. "Something beautiful, I know."

"A pot-boiler," returned the young artist with a laugh. "But it is said to be rather pretty. I've not forgotten our compact, Dorothy. I am to paint you some day. And weren't you to put me into a book? You'll have to stretch your imagination so hard to find anything interesting. I pity you."

"'The Rising Artist'; or 'The Risen Artist'," announced Sara.

"Oh, don't!" cried Dorothy. "You make me think of a pan of bread."

"Of dough, you mean. You're not learned in cooking," laughed Rose. "I am. I can't tell you about the people with whom I have become acquainted," she added; "for you know nothing of them and would not be interested—oh, yes, there is one; Dia Chesterdown came to see me not long ago. She is at one of the most famous boarding schools in Paris; but I can see she is not happy, though she pretends so. Why, she would never have come to see me but for her longing for a home face, poor child. I was never good enough for her at Ridgemore."

"She is to be pitied," said Dorothy. "I pity anybody who has Mr. Chesterdown for a father."

"So do I," agreed Grace. "I don't believe in him. Mamma doesn't either; nor Ned, though he'll not say much. But we can't help ourselves. Nor can Dia."

"She brought a schoolmate with her," Rose went on, "a very pretty French girl with graceful manners, but nothing else, so far as I could see. I know French now well enough to talk easily with people. But she was so different from our girls. Perhaps there was something in her, but she was afraid to bring it out. Dia and I talked of Ridgemore days, in French for the other's benefit. I had been enough at the college and your teas and receptions and frolics to know a good deal, if I had not been a student. The poor girl had a positively hungry look on her face as she sat and listened; she had never heard of a life so free and happy. I pitied her. And I pitied Dia. All that talk made her the more homesick; but she would have it, she went back to it whenever I

tried something else. She explained that she wanted her schoolmate to know what our colleges were like. Dia is handsomer than ever. I dare say she will make a brilliant match; and that is probably what Mr. Chesterdown intends for her." Then, suddenly, Rose looked from Priscy to Dorothy, and smiled. "But I hear of lords and ladies here," she added. "Any conquests?"

"Yes, indeed!" answered Dorothy. "A noble duke has quite taken my heart. As to Pell-Mell, she must answer for herself." And she glanced roguishly at Priscy's heightened color.

After a few minutes of banter, Rose gave some account of her early days in Paris; her mistakes over the language; her homesickness; yet, in spite of all drawbacks, her happiness in her work. She told of her first sale, how having hawked her pictures from what seemed to her one end of the city to the other, and returning home very tired and hungry, and with not too many sous in her pocket to buy her food, she came to a little shop which in the morning when her hopes were high, she had passed by in scorn. But not then. It proved Kismet to her. The owner bought her largest picture, and paid his smallest price. But she had begun to sell; and from that time she kept on, not brilliantly, but enough to encourage her. Sometimes she received praise, sometimes criticism; but she was getting on fairly and was happy; and so glad to see her old friends. Could any one tell her about Kitty Hyde? Dia had inquired for her, and called her her sister, but in English.

Dorothy had received a letter from her shortly before, and she read it aloud. Kitty was delighted that her friends were having a happy time, and treasured every bit of information or description of persons or places. Some day when in the work she loved she had earned enough to travel, she also would see foreign lands. She wrote that she had been studying hard and gaining somewhat, and that as soon as she could afford it, she was going to take lessons of some good actor, if she could find one willing to teach her. In the autumn she was to give an entertainment, and was working hard over it. She had the principal part, but Mr. Norcross was aiding her, and had also taken an important rôle. He was as kind to her as if she were Dorothy herself, but not perhaps as if she were Miss Pell. Kitty realized that he liked acting for its own sake; but beyond that, he had been kind and interested. With his help she would get on famously, she wrote, and make a big sum to give to the settlement-house work; for the people had been so kind to her.

"But I must confess to you," she added, "that I'm selfish, too. If I do well here, it may open a way to my own career—think of Kitty Hyde talking about a career! But it is all due to the kind encouragement of my friends."

"I always thought there was something good in Mr. Norcross," said Priscy, "for all that he seemed given up to antics."

A knock at the door. There stood Colonel Pell, as smiling as his young friends.

"If the affairs of the nation have been settled," he said, "what do you say to taking pity on an old gentleman who is dying for a lark, and giving him one—all of you?"

"Who is the old gentleman?" asked Dorothy.

"Good! Good!" cried the others, and clapped their hands, while the newcomer having accepted the invitation to enter, stood watching them with an expression as youthful as that of the youngest.

"I'm sure we are all ready for a lark, or any other bird," answered Sara—"if it's not too small."

"It shall be as large as you like," replied Colonel Pell. "What will you vote for? We will take Miss Hewes to the picture galleries to-morrow, and start early. Possibly, we are not in trim for the enthusiasm of art this afternoon. I suspect we are more inclined for a frolic?"

"Papa, you've hit the nail on the head."

"I'm so glad I've not hammered my fingers. But what will you have?"

XXXII

DOROTHY RESIGNS

When the Duke of Buccleugh came one day in London, Dorothy was ashamed of being glad that Colonel and Mrs. Pell and Priscy were all out and she had the visit to herself. Neither was he sorry, although he was politely regretful, and left his farewells to his friends. For he was to return to his Edinburgh home that very day, and probably would not be in London again before the others sailed.

The duchess was well. Lady Griselda was still visiting her, he said. They spoke of Bournemouth, of the incident at Inverness, of places and people that Dorothy had seen. He always enjoyed talking to this girl.

But while doing it, he was studying her, watching to see if she showed any anxiety, any eagerness? He wondered how far Dalkeith had gone? And still more, how far he would go? That the young man was greatly pleased with Dorothy was evident to his grandfather who had been pondering ever since the evening at his home. Buccleugh did not wonder; but he could not approve. His own admiration for Dorothy, and Dalkeith's were very different. The latter meant the breaking up of a cherished wish of his own. It all depended upon his grandson. For no American girl would refuse such a position, were it

offered her. Yet if it must be other than Griselda, it was best that it should be Dorothy. Still, he had not given up hope of the former.

In parting with Dorothy, he put into her hands two small packages, one for herself, one for Priscy.

"Souvenirs of your visit to our home from my wife and myself with our kindest wishes," he said.

The gift to Dorothy was a beautiful copy of "The Lady of the Lake", a first edition which she was enough of a bibliophile to know was very valuable.

"Oh, your Grace," she said looking up at him, "I thank you; but this is too much."

He was pleased by her appreciation. "No, no, not too much for one who does me the honor of considering me a relative of that great man," he answered her.

She secretly wondered what he had brought Priscy?

And so he said farewell to Miss Brooke, not having settled it with himself where she stood.

Was it possible that Dorothy had not settled it with herself either? She liked him very much. She looked after him with a regret that she was to see no more of him.

But was that certainly so?

Among the social opportunities open to them in London was one with which Dorothy was especially delighted, an invitation that Colonel Pell and his party had received to an entertainment at the home of the American ambassador. She had heard much of the stately and famous old mansion in which he

"OH, YOUR GRACE," SHE SAID, "I THANK YOU."

was living; this and the works of art with which it was filled would alone be worth a visit. But she cared yet more for the people she would meet there, and the social life in London, even under American auspices, that it would reveal to her. And then, the ambassador and Judge Brooke had once been traveling companions for months and since that time always friends. When the former greeted her, he would be sure to ask after her father. Nobody else whom she had met in England knew him. And for this part of it Dorothy cared most of all. She thought more than her wont about her appearance which must do her father credit, and carefully considered what she was to wear. Indeed, she and Priscy held an animated discussion over their attire.

"But it's of no use for me to talk," declared the latter. "For mamma will settle me in two minutes; she knows the best thing, and she will insist upon my wearing it. Well, at least that gives me time for more important affairs," she added resignedly, "and keeps me better dressed than I should dress myself. Dorothy, do you remember my clothes when I came to school; and those red ribbons I used to wear on my red hair?"

Both girls laughed. "But you came all right very soon, Pell-Mell," said the other.

"Yes; thanks to you. And I was presentable the first time step-mamma saw me."

"Indeed, she thought so, Priscy; and made up her mind to have you. And it's right, dear child."

For answer the girl wound her arms about the

speaker's neck and laid her head on Dorothy's shoulder. "Oh, you darling! What happiness I owe to you," she said. "Dorothy, how much I love you."

"Ditto!" answered the other kissing her. And they returned to their discussion of the entertainment. Ned was to be there, and Lord Hervey. And Lord Dalkeith who had been sure of being in London before their departure, might turn up. Altogether, Dorothy counted upon having a very good time.

The day before the event, however, as she came up from luncheon, some one knocked at her door. It was Mrs. Bridges.

"I saw you come in here alone, Miss Brooke," she began; "and I followed you. I want to have a word with you in private, my dear."

"'A word in private?'" echoed Dorothy. What was coming? What had she done?

But it proved rather something that Dorothy was to do. "My dear," repeated Mrs. Bridges, "I'm in such a state."

"Oh, why, Mrs. Bridges? Are you ill?" And the girl looked at her with concern. For the poor lady was most woe-begone.

"Yes, indeed, I am ill—very ill with disappointment. You must be my physician. Nobody else can help me."

Dorothy inwardly shuddered with a premonition. But she appeared unmoved, except by a friendly sympathy, and asked:

"What is the matter, Mrs. Bridges? I hope you have a better helper in your trouble than I can be."

"You are my last resort, my last appeal," returned the other. Then she unburdened herself. She had determined to go to this entertainment, and the more difficult of accomplishment she found it, the more she had determined. After incredible labors Charley had succeeded in securing one card of invitation. There was not another to be had anywhere. He would willingly resign in her favor; in fact, she did not believe he cared about going, he was such a strange fellow. But that would not help her. It was impossible to go there without an escort. It was not possible that Mrs. Pell would be willing to have her go under her auspices? How did Miss Brooke feel about asking her?

"She would not do it if I did ask her, Mrs. Bridges. You see, she could not. She has her daughter and me. She could not ask Colonel Pell to take more than three ladies to any place like that. You must see. I'm very sorry."

But the other was not interested in hearing of Dorothy's sorrow in this trouble; but only in getting her help out of it. After a moment's silence, she said:

"Mr. Longley tells me he has an engagement with Mr. Harris to give him some points on this entertainment and to see some people who are to be there, and he has to go, or he would be happy to give me his ticket. And he has to be here, there, and everywhere all the evening, or he would escort me."

"He told me he had. Of course he has to do it, if he is engaged," answered the girl, secretly pleased that Ned could not give up his place to this applicant.

There was no need of her going at all; it was only her pushing ambition.

"Yes," said Mrs. Bridges with a vindictive accent that brought sharply before her hearer the persecuting woman of that summer at Mount Rest. "Of course he has to keep an engagement when he has made it, or take the consequences. He has made other engagements also." Dorothy started. Ned was between two fires. "And there is Miss Longley," went on the speaker with the first accent of discontent with Grace that Dorothy had ever heard from her. "If she were really a society woman, with her advantages she'd know how to do things, and get things. She's a lady, of course. But that isn't everything."

"It is very true," retorted Dorothy, "that no lady could do what you seem to expect of Miss Longley." It was a thrust she could not forbear. But it did not go deep, as she immediately added, "You may have my ticket, Mrs. Bridges; that is all I can do for you."

"Oh, no, no, Miss Brooke!" cried her hearer in a delight that she could not keep out of her voice. "I couldn't do that—unless— But, of course, you can easily get another. You are acquainted with Mr.——"

"Never mind about that," interrupted Dorothy. She got the card and replacing her own name by Mrs. Bridges', she handed it to her. "Here it is," she said. "It will be all right. I'll explain."

Mrs. Bridges was effusive in her thanks. But she resolved that Charley should never have an opportunity to examine that ticket; it should be kept in her own

hands, and he should suppose that she had secured a duplicate from Miss Brooke.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Pell that evening in her severest tone, "you have not only been silly and really weak in this affair, you have been positively rude. What excuse can you give, or can I give for such a thing as not only your absence after your acceptance, but the transfer of your invitation, which is inexcusable?"

"I have written and said the best I could," murmured the girl.

"Oh, have you?" asked Mrs. Pell with an air of relief. But the next moment she returned to the attack, and was really severe in her wrath.

"You have really done wrong, Dorothy," said Colonel Pell with equal decision, but more gentleness.

Still the girl offered no defence, only her head drooped a little more as the weight of his judgment was added to his wife's.

"I shall make that woman feel what she has done," asserted Mrs. Pell, her tones vibrating with indignation.

Then Dorothy sprang up from her chair in Mrs. Pell's sitting-room and faced the two.

"Oh, no, no! Don't do that!" she cried, terror in her face. "She is angry now with Ned for not having given her his ticket. He couldn't; he has to write about it—I mean the affair, something Mr. Harris wants. And she fretted because Grace couldn't square her elbows and fight her way to an invitation for her. And if you—oh, don't, don't do

it." She paused, her look passing from one to the other. Then she broke into a low cry: "If you had seen Mrs. Longley—if you had seen her! She may die as it is, and she surely will without what they can give her. And that woman is capable of tipping them both out in her revenge. Oh, this is nothing to do for my two friends—and that saint."

There was silence. Husband and wife looked at one another, the eyes of both suspiciously moist. Then,

"No, Dorothy, I will not," said Mrs. Pell very gently.

"Don't be troubled, little girl," said Colonel Pell. "You are right; and it shall be made so." For he would find a way to tell her hosts the story.

Dorothy was trying to smile now. "I'm not a baby about giving up an evening," she said. "There are ever so many more entertainments to come in the world. And I'm going to have a lovely, old-fashioned time with Grace while you are all away. I don't know what made me cry—unless it was that I've been thinking so much of how good it would be in that strange place and this strange country to hear my father spoken about."

XXXIII

ONE TOO MANY

"I HAVE a fine idea for that scene we were going over the other day," said Dorothy as she and Ned Longley were in the drawing-room of her hotel; he was staying elsewhere, for these quarters were far above his purse. Others were in the immense room, but strangers, at a distance, and absorbed in what they themselves were saying. The two were free to talk as they pleased. "That is to say," she added, "it seems to me good. But what do you think of it?" And she gave him in some detail what had suggested itself to her.

"Yes, I like it," he answered. "I always do like your suggestions."

"No, not always, Ned; but only for the most part," she said with a smile. "I can remember occasions when you've cut my fine fancies into inch bits."

"I'm sure I was all wrong if I ever did that, Dorothy. Your judgment is always good; and your suggestions are inspirations."

"Oh, come, Ned. Don't descend to flattering me. You generally treat me better than that. Leave the flattery to drawing-room twaddle. We are business persons."

"Oh, Dorothy, do you think of it all only as business?" he cried bitterly. "And I—oh, what it is to

me!" Was it to him the grubbing? To the others all the opportunity? He lived over again the scene on the rocks at Staffa. His thoughts were in a whirl. This hour that they had been together alone in the midst of others, it had seemed to him that she filled his life. He had sat looking at her as she talked of their play; he had not heard what she was saying to him; he had only seen her. He did not know into what unwisdom of speech he might have hurried, how he might have forgotten duty in his love, if opportunity had favored him longer.

He turned his head at a sound that threatened to interrupt the dear voice speaking to him. A boy was bringing her a card.

The next moment Lord Dalkeith was saying to her: "It seems a perfect age since I've seen you, Miss Brooke. I suppose to you it seems yesterday?"

"The day before, I think," laughed Dorothy.

"I thought you had gone home some time ago," he said to Ned as he shook hands with him.

"That's to come," responded Longley lightly; "as it is with you who happen not to be at home at the moment either."

"We are both better employed," returned the other with a laugh that acknowledged defeat.

Dorothy listening, thought that Ned ought to succeed. Nobody could ever get the better of him.

Longley's enjoyment of Dorothy's society was over. He would have liked to take his leave at once; for he was not in the mood for lightness, although he

had assumed it. But he was not going to appear driven off, and he made his waiting to say farewell to the others, for he sailed that afternoon, an excuse for remaining. He perceived in Dalkeith a rival whom he would have had to fight, were he himself in the lists. It was bitter to go away and leave Dorothy to any rival. He had never realized as he did at the moment the difference between Dorothy as she was today, free to meet him at any time as friend and coworker while he could still dream dreams about her, and Dorothy forever beyond the reach of his dreams, and perhaps even out of his sight in a distant land. He must not try to interfere with any great prospects that opened to her; although the might of his manhood rose up within him and he knew that, were he free, he would have pitted a mere competence against a coronet, and tried his fate with her.

As he watched Dalkeith, he told himself that he would rather it were Bridges. And yet he saw that this might be because he was no longer jealous of Bridges, and he was of the earl who was so far as he knew a gentleman in character, if he had once forgotten his manners.

His meditations were interrupted by the entrance of Priscy blooming from her motor-car drive and followed by Lord Hervey who explained that Miss Pell and Bridges had picked him up. Ned believed him a good fellow, in spite of the lesson he had endeavored to inculcate; and he inquired with a great show of interest, for Lady Griselda. Then Grace appeared,

They made a merry party; and when in a few minutes Ned took his departure leaving his good-bys for those he had not been fortunate enough to find, he seemed in excellent spirits.

Mrs. Bridges although sorely tempted to remain in such company, finally decided that she ought to show Miss Longley a little more of the world, and for this purpose and because her husband was so anxious to have her remain abroad long enough to establish her health, that they would spend the winter on the Continent.

Sara Osborne and her sister decided to sail for home with Dorothy and the others.

Two days before they left Sara came to the former's room.

"And what is it now?" cried Dorothy. "You're perfectly radiant with fun."

"I can't keep it to myself a moment longer," said the other shutting the door carefully behind her. "Dorothy, Annie and I have had an invitation this morning. Guess to do what?"

"To go to the theatre," responded the other promptly. For there was a much-admired play then running.

"Theatre! I can't express my scorn of so small an affair. Guess again—but no, you'll never hit it. Let me begin at the beginning. Mr. Bridges, as you may have observed, has been very kind to two lone, lorn women travelers and made things pleasanter for us many a time; and we've tried to do our part and make things merrier for him. I don't take it that

anybody has deliberately intended anything; it has just come about. Have you noticed?"

"Yes, I have," said Dorothy, her mind upon a certain hope of her own and Priscy's in regard to Charley Bridges and some one who was not Sara Osborne.

"Well! The old lady approves!" And Sara broke into merriment. "She seems to be the only one that takes it seriously; and that's what kills me. Charley Bridges is very nice; but——"

"Yes, he is very nice indeed," said Dorothy with a touch of resentment. She might not want to marry him, but she was not going to hear him belittled. "I've known him a long time," she said.

"I remember. So you have. He stood buffer to you, I believe, that summer you made acquaintance with the old lady." And for an instant she looked searchingly at Dorothy. "Now for the invitation," she went on. "Mrs. Bridges inveigled me into her room under pretence of getting my judgment upon a new suit. And then she gave me in outline their fall and winter itinerary. It was delightful, and I said so. 'Then why won't you and your sister join us?' she asked. 'You are so interesting, you know; so brilliant, as I was saying to my son, and he quite agreed. You and your sister will make it so much pleasanter for us all. Ah, do come, Miss Osborne,' she finished. There are times, Dorothy, when it's easiest to tell the truth, not that *you* don't tell it when it's not. This seemed to me one of the times. So, I thanked her for her good opinion, and said how charming the trip

would be to us both—I omitted to mention what a miss Dorothy and company would be—but that it was impossible. My sister and I had spent all our money; we had barely enough to get home and go through the Custom House. With that she came up to me and laid a hand on my shoulder. 'Don't let that deter you a moment, Miss Osborne,' she said. 'It shall cost you nothing; I invite you both as my guests.' Whew! I had hardly breath enough left to come here to tell you."

"And are you going?"

"Dorothy Brooke! This is the first time in my life I've been mad with you! No, there was another; but I've forgotten what it was about. Go? Why! If there were not a good many other reasons, Madam Bridges is not a woman who ever gives something for nothing."

"True," said her listener with a smothered sigh at the thought of what must be Grace's experiences.

"She was rather huffy when I left her," said Sara. "But she'll have to get over it. I'm glad that Grace has the young man to stand by her. And he will, Dorothy." She gave a quiet smile which Dorothy was not sure of reading and did not question.

The "triplets", as Sara called Mrs. Bridges and her companions, stood on the pier and waved farewells, as their former fellow-travelers steamed away. Dorothy thought of Grace's plaint, "I ought to be near my mother." Yet she had not looked miserable at the prospect of a winter of travel.

Again it was the night before they landed, this time upon their own shores; and again Dorothy stood by the ship's side and looked out over the water. But this time it was in retrospect as much as in thought of the future. Only that day Colonel Pell had said to her:

"Is anything troubling you, Dorothy? You seem to have something on your mind." And he had looked keenly at her.

She had answered in surprise. She had not dreamed of showing any sign of trouble; she had none.

Yet she had a perplexity. This was the memory of what she had perceived in regard to Lord Dalkeith. She believed that, as Rex would have put it, the game was in her own hands. If she were right, it was her own attitude that perplexed her. Was she glad? Or sorry? Or indifferent? Had ambition its grip upon her? What did she want?

She knew that, first of all, she wanted home.

XXXIV

OLD FRIENDS ONCE MORE

Dorothy sat on the lounge in the morning-room at Brookehurst, on one side Olive, and Harry on the other, each with an arm about her, while hers were around their necks.

"This is just like being at home, isn't it, Dorothy?"

"Exactly," replied the girl giving him a squeeze which he returned with interest. "This is like nothing else but home."

Mrs. Brooke from a chair opposite her laughed contentedly. Getting her "little comrade" back again was even better than she had anticipated. Yet was it quite like the little comrade of old days, when everything was confided to her mother? She, too, had noticed the occasional shadow on Dorothy's face; but she had not appeared to do so. Confidence unsought was all that she desired. Then, the shadow was so light, that Mrs. Brooke sometimes believed it merely her fancy. If not, it was less than when she had first observed it; it was passing away in the sunny atmosphere of home.

"Don't you want to know what the play is we're going to give you to-night?" asked Olive. "Harry and I wrote it all ourselves; and I know it's good."

"So do I, Olive. I'm all curiosity. But I'm not going to spoil the fun by prying. At what time will

the curtain rise? How many hours more shall I have to wait?"

"You mustn't expect much of a stage," said Harry. "The great hit will be in the quality of the play, and the fine acting."

"Much the more important part," replied his sister gravely.

"Posing for the three Graces?" inquired Rex coming into the room. "I declare, Doro," he added with a laugh, "you're considerably pre-empted."

"There is plenty of room for you to join the adorers, Rex," she laughed back, pointing to the floor at her feet.

"Thank you. But I've not been to the gym lately. I'm afraid I'm not up to squatting gracefully—or down to it. But I'm in the right position mentally—I am, upon my word, Doro," he added with a look that warmed the girl's heart. She was very fond and proud of Rex.

"Mother," she said, "*you've* not made me a speech. You're not going to be left out of the worshipers?"

"There doesn't seem to be any place left for me but your lap," returned Mrs. Brooke with a twinkle in her eyes.

Then Olive and Harry shouted, Rex patted his mother condescendingly upon the back, and the family generally exhibited that happy condition of mind which Dorothy's return the previous evening had brought about.

"Alas!" said Rex a few minutes later. "I must tear myself away. I must be off to business."

"It's all business and Lulu since he's engaged," declared Olive.

"Thank you. I thought it was Olive sometimes. No more motor-car drives."

"And he took us both for a fifty-mile spin last month," cried Harry. "That's no fair to you, Rex."

"No, Harry, it's not," said his brother. "I'm glad to see you have a sense of justice about you."

"Oh, well," said Olive, "I meant——"

But Rex had gone, singing as he went the last air he had heard from Lulu, and remembering with pride how much better she had done it.

After all, Dorothy had seen the ambassador and his wife, and had talked with them for a longer time than she could have done at the reception; and she had brought home a cordial message to her father from his old friend, which pleased him much.

All too soon it came time for college. But her days at home had been filled with the many little things that she was always doing for others. Her gifts to Bella and the other maids proved exactly what they liked. And she told them of places and incidents of her summer, until Bella declared it seemed as if they had been traveling abroad.

She kept the family laughing at her amusing stories; and in quiet talks with her mother, she told much about the persons she had met, and they were neither few nor uninteresting; a good deal about the duke; and many things of Lord Dalkeith, but not the things that Mrs. Brooke most desired to learn.

Ridgemore College again! A group of the girls were gathered about the travelers, asking questions so fast that they scarcely waited for the answers.

"There's one thing I really must know," declared Susie Codman.

"What is it, Susie? Hurry up. I want to ask something very important," said Clara Morton.

"But mine is the more important, I'm sure," returned Susie. "Listen, Dorothy." Then when every ear was strained, she made a pause.

"Why don't you ask, and be done with it?" cried Mattie Winters.

"Modesty," sighed Susie. "But, oh, yes, I will. Dorothy, did you and Priscy get any fudge over there very much better than mine?"

"Fudge, indeed! You mean thing! Trivialities! Mountain and mouse! Tell her, 'Yes, a hundred times better!'" greeted this question.

"Windsor Castle—and 'fudge'!" sneered Mattie Winters.

"It's not trivialities," declared Susie. "It's having an eye to the future. I don't earn my living just at present. But my father may fail. And then I always did believe in that law in the Talmud, that every man must bring up his son—and it ought to have been daughter also—to some trade by which at need he—or she—could earn a living."

"No, Susie," edged in Dorothy's word, "we didn't begin to get any as good. Over there they don't know what our confectionery means. And when they give you ice-cream at hotels and restaurants, they take it

for granted you have the appetite of a Liliputian. No," she repeated, "we never tasted fudge like yours all the time we were gone. Have you any more on hand? I'm quite ready. Aren't you, Pell-Mell?"

"Why do you call her 'Pell-Mell'?" said Dora Wilson. "I've always wondered."

"It's a reference to a secret of state belonging to past eons," returned Dorothy who had not the least intention of telling it.

"You crowded me off the floor, Dora," said Susie. "Well, then, I'm glad I could turn professional, if occasion called, Dorothy. Now, girls, I've only one more statement to make, and then I'll yield the floor. We'll have a fudge party this evening."

This announcement was met by a chorus of delighted exclamations.

"Am I to be invited?" "And I?" appealed one and another, until Susie assured them that everybody present was invited.

There was abundance of hard work in the senior year. Dorothy found that she had come back to it with renewed energy. What she had seen and learned had added to her power of assimilation and her enjoyment of mental and psychical problems. She was also eager to become more proficient in languages from having perceived how much a matter of course such proficiency was held to be abroad. There to be sure, one could scarcely travel a day without running into another language. But even here, as she said to Miss Aylesford, she realized the advantages of

being a polyglot. She had come to like the dean as much as she had once disliked her; she perceived the nobleness of her character under a cold exterior. And then, Miss Aylesford had warmed to Dorothy whom at first she could understand as little as the girl had understood her. She was greatly interested in what Dorothy told her of her summer.

"You got more out of your trip than I did out of mine," she confessed, "although I staid longer."

"I enjoyed every minute of it," said the girl. She perceived that this was true. Yet there remained a flavor of something she could not well define. The prospect looked bright. This something was in herself, like a new quality in her character which she could not comprehend and did not know what to do with.

She missed Rex and Ned, no longer close at hand, although she saw them frequently; and she missed their friends in the same class who with them had added to the brightness of college life. But she did not lack for amusements and enjoyments, and, certainly, not for hard work. This year her theses were more exacting; and she had promised Mr. Harris a story. Then, Ned and she had finishing touches to add to the play that they hoped to bring out. Sometimes they wrote about these; sometimes they telephoned; and more than once he had run out to see her about them.

The time for Kitty Hyde's entertainment approached. Everything about it seemed prospering. Mr. Norcross did not come to talk it over with her so often as he used to do; but she supposed that was not

necessary. Another entertainment was to be given later which absorbed some of the ladies of the settlement house. Kitty had not learned of this in time to postpone her own, as she would have done. But all was going well, she was sure; and she was happy.

Dorothy could have told her that Mr. Norcross had not so much time for her as formerly because he spent a part of it in endeavors to see Priscy, and when successful, in trying to better his position with her, which did not satisfy him. He had heard rumors of an English conquest, and they troubled him. At least, Miss Pell should not think he even compared her with the girl who was trying to be an actress and whom he had been so generously, perhaps too unselfishly, assisting.

XXXV

KITTY HYDE'S ENTERTAINMENT

It was a rainy evening about the middle of November. Dorothy was somewhat reluctantly going on with her studies, for she was in an idle mood, when there came a knock at her door, and Priscy stood there with a pleading face.

"Do call a lull in the tempest, Dorothy," she began; and at the moment there came a drive of rain against the window.

"I call a lull in the tempest!" echoed her hearer.

"In the tempest of your labors, of course. The rain is able to take care of itself."

"Indeed it is. How it is storming! I'm glad nothing calls us out to-night. I believe I'm tired. I don't feel spirit enough to breast a rain drop."

"That from you? You must be pretty well done up then!" As Priscy spoke, she sank into a chair, and the girls began to talk of their summer, idly at first, and then with an interest that made them forget time, until a sharp knock at the door of the sitting room brought them to the present.

Dorothy sprang up and opened the door, and stared in amazement at the girl who stood there with bedraggled skirts and disheveled hair, her face wet with rain, perhaps with tears also, her eyes angry and

despairing, her breath gone for the moment as Dorothy pulled her into the room and Priscy rushed up to her with a cry of alarm.

"Kitty Hyde! What *is* the matter?" cried both at once.

"Everything!" gasped the girl as soon as speech came to her. "The whole thing has gone up sky high. All my work is ruined; and my plans, too. I'm good for nothing."

She broke into weeping; and it was plain that she could not tell her story until she was calmer. Meanwhile Dorothy pulled the pins out of the dripping hat and lifted it from Kitty's head, unbuttoned her soaked coat and carried it down stairs to be dried. Then when she returned, she pulled off Kitty's wet gloves and put them on the radiator.

"Take your time, little girl," she said with a glance at Priscy who was stroking the bowed head in silence. "You are going to spend the night with me; and there'll be time to tell us everything; we must know it. But rest first. Have you been running, dearie?"

"I don't know what I've been doing," said Kitty. "I've been wild since he threw me over—not me—not me; I don't care a rap for him—but the whole affair that I've worked so over, and hoped so much from. It's all gone to smash; and it's all his fault. We could have pulled through, but for this."

"Are you talking of the entertainment?" cried Priscy.

The other nodded in silence.

"And who is 'he' who has thrown you over—your

entertainment, I mean?" She stood thinking. "Is it Mr. Norcross?" she asked.

Kitty looked up at her, with a recollection that for the moment had been banished by her trouble. "Oh, I mustn't speak against him to you," she cried.

"Why not; pray, if he deserves it? I want to know it."

"Now you have your breath again, Kitty dear, we want the whole story, every word of it as straight as you can give it. We want to help you," said Dorothy.

"Help me! When the thing is only two days off! And the bills all printed! He said he would attend to that. I've only just seen them; that's what makes me wildest of all. He thought the thing was not going to be a success, so he had his name struck off these bills, and his part with it, when the printer was at work on them, and he never even told me of it! I've just seen them now—and seen him."

"It was a scallawag thing to do, I must say, if it is slang," said Priscy.

"When you saw him just now, what reason did he give you for doing it?" asked Dorothy.

"He laughed at my fury, and said the ladies were trying to quash the affair because it was too soon before theirs, and would, as he expressed it, 'take the wind out of their sails'; and it would never go without their help. So, he'd gone out of it, too; he wasn't a fellow who liked to be in anything that was not going to be a success, he said."

Priscy uttered an exclamation of disgust; and for a

moment Dorothy shut her mouth hard. Then she turned to Priscy.

"What do you say, Pell-Mell? This is going to be a success—one of the successes Mr. Norcross is not in. Why not a success? What do you say?" she repeated. "You'll help?"

"With all my heart and hands—and head, and tongue, and pen, Dorothy. You know it. Oh, what treatment!"

"Yes; but keep your wrath bottled up until afterward. We'll have to work first. Two days are a short allowance. But two girls and a man can do a good deal in that time."

Kitty sat looking from one to the other, her sobs checked, her eyes large with wonder in which was dawning a joy that scarcely dared yet to show itself.

"Why! Why!" she began. "There isn't anything to do now. He and the ladies have sat down on me so hard, I'm entirely squashed."

"You seem to be reviving a little," commented Dorothy. Then she added: "I told you that you're to spend the night with me; and before we go to sleep, something will have been done. The ladies may have plumped down hard on you, and Mr. Norcross deserted you. But if Ridgemore College lifts you up, I think you'll stand. Keep your feelings in the background for a while, little girl, and help us plan."

"I suppose I'm silly," returned Kitty meekly. "But my head aches with all the plans that have toppled over on it."

The other gave her a squeeze that, although hasty,

was vigorous. "I wonder if I can get him by telephone?" she said looking at Priscy.

"Get whom by telephone? What man, Dorothy?"

"Why, Rex, of course. His mimicry is not quite equal to Mr. Norcross'; but he will do admirably, if I can get him."

"Mr. Norcross was to take two parts," said Kitty. Her eyes were bright again and her cheeks flushed, although the tremulousness of her voice showed a lurking doubt of the possibility of bringing victory out of ruin.

"Perhaps I could take one of them, if it's not long, or hard?" suggested Priscy.

"You could! You could!" cried Kitty. "But it's too much." And then she added, "I depended a good deal on these ladies for the audience."

"If I can wake up the college, you will have an audience," answered Dorothy, slipping her feet into her overshoes and throwing her raincoat about her. "I'm going to see if Miss Aylesford won't help us out? If I can get her interested, the thing will go. On the way, I'll try to ring up Rex. If he only happens to be in town, as he often is, and I can get him, he will run out here to-night. And while I'm gone, Pell-Mell, won't you get hold of Susie Codman and Clara Morton, and anybody else you think of and want, and bring them here? When they know what we want of them, I believe they will do it."

"We'll soon be back, Kitty," said Priscy as she and Dorothy departed upon their errands.

The latter speedily returned elate.

"The dean is just lovely," she announced. "She will do all she can, and will go herself, which means everything. And Rex is coming as soon as he can get here. I barely caught him. Explanations are waiting for him here, I said. What should I do without him to fall back upon?"

"You don't have to do without—quite yet," laughed Susie Codman who with Clara Morton and Dora Wilson were holding an animated council in Dorothy's room.

"Of course, we'll wake up the college, girls," said Clara, "and carry with us as large a part of this august body as we can manage. We'll get an audience, never fear. A tiger is tame in comparison to the way we will work. But come, Susie, we must be at it. It is growing late." And the three ran off with words of encouragement to Kitty who by this time had begun to believe in the possibility of retrieval and was alert to lend herself to whatever promised a way out of her disaster.

"Whew! Whew!" said Rex with a disgusted look. "I'd never have dreamed it of Norcross. But the world doesn't turn on him as its axis. Let him go. I'm not up to his mark, to be sure; but the audience will not know what they've missed—and I'll tell you what, Doro," he added turning to his sister, "Lulu will come and sing for us; I'm sure of it. She has been taking lessons all the autumn and is in splendid voice."

"She is always that," cried Dorothy. "Yes, she will, I'm sure. That is an inspiration, Rex. I never thought of her."

"I'll see if I can get her now on the long distance telephone. There's no time to be lost. She has some beautiful songs on hand. I know she will be delighted to help out. Why, Miss Hyde, we'll beat Norcross' programme, after all." And he went to learn, if he could, what Lulu said to the request.

The young entertainer her face bright with joy, her laugh ready at any moment, was skilfully putting into place her disarranged programme when Rex re-entered, beaming.

"She will do anything," he said. "She will come up to-morrow with her music to consult with Miss Hyde, if she may visit you, Doro? What shall I say?"

"Exactly what you have said—yes," laughed his sister.

"And now we shall come out finely," he went on. "Oh, by the way, Miss Hyde, I ought to have my part this moment to take with me to study to-night."

"It's at home," she answered. "I'll get it." And she rose.

"She cannot go out again to-night in this storm, Rex," said Dorothy. "It's too far, and she will be ill. She was really so when she came here. Won't it do the first thing in the morning?"

"The very first?"

"I'll take the first car in from here," said Kitty. "Come for it before breakfast, if you like. And I can't thank you; I don't know how."

"Send us all tickets to your debut as a star actress," laughed Rex. "You will get there, Miss Hyde. Don't

make too much account of Norcross. There are hosts of things like what he has done in the world. Good night, everybody."

"I would send in a messenger to-morrow morning for my part, Kitty," said Priscy. "I can't come myself on account of recitations. But, you see, you will have to explain it to me."

"I'll be on hand, Miss Pell. When shall I come?"

Arrangements made, the girls prepared for the sleep which by this time they greatly needed.

"It will not do to talk slang at Ridgemore, or I'd say we shall have to hustle," laughed Dorothy. "We must do the thing, though."

The following afternoon Norcross who had heard rumors of what was going on, called upon Miss Pell. She was engaged and could not see him.

That evening he waylaid her and Dorothy as they were going to the dean's. All through the summer and autumn he had encouraged Kitty's plans and contributed in a substantial manner to their promised success, until the day of the collapse. What he had told her of his desire to be only on the rôle of success did not concern the entertainment alone, although had this been well sustained elsewhere, he might not have withdrawn. He rather liked the girl and was interested in her histrionic powers. And so, all the summer and autumn he had seen a good deal of her, and had treated her on an equality, so that she did not perceive how he really considered her an inferior. She interested him and her work did so still more, especially while Priscy was away. But since Miss Pell's return,

more brilliant and charming than ever and his added uncertainty as to his chances of keeping even the place he had held with her, he had become more impressed with his unwisdom in the matter of Kitty Hyde. He had never pretended love for her; he had been only kind to her; and now he feared that he had been too kind for his own interests.

Walking beside Priscy that evening, he told her of his great helpfulness to Kitty Hyde, a poor girl who needed a helping hand; and of his final withdrawal from the entertainment merely as a hint to her to do the same in time to save the whole affair from the disaster inevitable in view of the defection of the ladies relied upon.

"And so, when you are especially needed to lend a hand, you take yours away?" returned Priscy with scornful coldness.

"But, Miss Pell, don't you see the poor girl will only make a dead failure of it? I want to save her from that."

"But you leave it to others to do. Perhaps that is as well for her, Mr. Norcross."

He recoiled as if she had struck him, as in a sense she had done. But recovering, he said:

"Then do you really believe anything can be done to assist Miss Hyde? If that is possible, I shall be happy to lend whatever aid I can to that worthy and hard-working girl."

"Your aid is unnecessary," returned Priscy. She could not bring herself to thank him for this lame offer.

"I beg, Miss Pell, in the memory of our past—acquaintance,"—he dared not say "friendship" to this haughty young woman—"that you will not misunderstand me?" he appealed.

"I understand you perfectly, Mr. Norcross. And now that we are at Miss Aylesford's house, I wish you good-evening."

"Good-evening, Miss Pell. You do not understand. You are most unjust—cruel. Can you not show it to her, Miss Brooke?"

"I see nothing that you can do now for Miss Hyde," returned Dorothy. And she, too, said good-evening as Priscy rang the bell at the dean's door. "Oh, Pell-Mell, you were terrible," she whispered as they passed into the hall.

"Thank you, Dorothy," said the girl. "Then I was a success."

As Norcross passed on into the night, and out of Priscy Pell's life, he perceived that his idea of success needed revision.

A fair evening, and more than a fair audience as to size, and in character an audience capable of helping Kitty Hyde's hopes if it should approve her work.

This it emphatically did. The girl seemed inspired; her acting was superb. Rex did his part admirably, well prompted by Dorothy behind the scenes, for he had had short time to learn his part. Lulu was applauded to the echo; and that helped Rex and everybody else.

After the affair was over, Kitty, praised and

encouraged to her heart's content, was scrupulous in dividing her honors among her helpers. But this did not lessen the good opinion of her abilities, or of herself.

When at last she stood with only these helpers about her merrily commenting on the evening's doings and the things that went right and had so nearly gone wrong, she was silent for a time. Then she looked at the others with tears in her eyes.

"I have learned something better than all the praise," she said. "I've found out the Lord will not leave me without friends, even though I am so alone in the world."

XXXVI

CHARLEY BRIDGES MAKES A DISCOVERY

"I CAN'T go anywhere this afternoon, Charley," said Mrs. Bridges with an ostentatious sigh of fatigue. "I'm entirely done up. If you knew what shopping was, you'd understand."

"I do my own," answered her son.

"A man's! How absurd! What is that, pray? You've not to choose laces, and decide about colors, and a hundred other things."

"Thank fortune, no, mamma. So, you can't go to some of the picture galleries this afternoon?"

"Not I, Charley. I don't think, on the whole," she added, "that looking at pictures is the best thing for me. It tires my head so, and it strains my eyes terribly. I have to keep my sight for more important things."

"Matching colors, for instance?"

"That's one thing, of course," she returned tartly. "And I must not get overfatigued. Your father wants me to establish my health perfectly. I shall lie down all the afternoon, and sleep if I can."

"Then, if you don't want Miss Longley, I'll take her to see the pictures, or something, if she would like to go."

"Really, Charley! I was planning to have her read me to sleep. Can't you go off and amuse yourself?"

"It's conf—mighty stupid work amusing one's self, unless there's somebody by to see you are amused," retorted the young man stiffly. "I say now, you can go to sleep by yourself all the better. I thought you were traveling to show Miss Longley Europe. How much idea of Paris do you get in a bedroom?"

"But if Mrs. Bridges wants me," interposed Grace who until then had been a silent auditor, "I would certainly rather stay."

The young man changed his tactics. "Oh, no," he said to her. "My mother is not a pig. She wants you to see all you can; and me not to be so bored trotting around by myself, that I'll trot into the Seine and find company there to fish me out." He fixed eyes of shrewd merriment upon his mother, and ended with a laugh. "But no joking," he added the next moment, "we both want to do something entertaining this beautiful day; don't we, Miss Longley? Why, mamma, let her look at the pictures, and tell you about them. Then you'll save your eyes and get posted at the same time."

"I didn't think of that," answered Mrs. Bridges. "That would do very well. Take her to see some of the most talked about pictures; as many as you can see and remember, Miss Longley. You will give me those touches you don't get in the guide books, and that make people perceive you've seen things for yourself."

As the young man helped Grace into the motor-car, he said to her:

"We'll have a spin in the Bois first. The weather

is too glorious to spend on the best pictures ever painted. Later, we'll go and take a look at something. I want you to go for my own sake," he added. "I'd a great deal rather hear you go all over it with my mother than see the things for myself; you put in a lot I can't find there."

As they were motoring, he said: "Next week we leave here. Mamma has not quite decided where to go next. Have you enjoyed Paris, Miss Longley?"

"Very much, Mr. Bridges. Only, it seems to me that I have enjoyed too much, and have not done enough; that your mother has not had enough of my time."

He turned upon her. "Now look here, Miss Longley"—he wanted to say "little brick", but he wisely forbore—"you're not in New England now. Just put that conscience of yours into your pocket; you'll have it there handy when you need it. I'll tell you when to take it out. I'll not allow my mother to be slighted and abused."

Grace laughed into the shrewd, merry eyes that were watching her.

"Very well," she answered. "On your honor, you'll tell me if I ever seem to be neglecting her in the least?"

"On my honor, I will tell you," he answered with an inward chuckle. "But only if on your honor you'll promise not to worry, but to have all the good times you can. Is it a bargain?"

"A fine one for me," she answered.

"And still better for me," he said. "I can't expect

my mother to be ready to go as much as I like to; and I simply am not going poking about alone."

"But I thought you had met friends here?"

"No, acquaintances. I did go to several places with them. But they always stopped and looked and gossiped when I was in a hurry to get on; and when there was something worth stopping for, they were in a terrific haste to be off. So, after a few times, they and I always had engagements at the wrong hours to fit in with each other."

Grace enjoyed the joke; and he watched her with his shrewd smile. He noticed again, as he had often done before, how merry her laugh was.

That day and many another, in Paris, on the Riviera, in Genoa, in Rome, in Florence, and elsewhere, he took her sight-seeing and gave her many delightful hours. But this was done always as his mother's companion, or more truly, as a family friend; he assumed no loverlike airs. He merely liked her; and he seemed to be constantly finding in her things to like better.

At Monte Carlo he was much amused. He took his mother and her to the Casino. Mrs. Bridges staked and won, and was jubilant; and lost, and wailed; and won again, until he warned her not to turn professional. But Grace would not gamble. He laid a gold piece on the table.

"Try it, Miss Longley," he said. "I want to see what luck you have. I'll take the risk; and if you win, you shall pay me back if you like."

"But she did not place it on the wheel. Instead, she picked it up and handed it back to him. "I would rather not," she said.

"Then I shall try it for you."

"No, don't do that, please," she said with the decision of a command.

"Then I shall do it for myself," he pursued holding it in his hand and looking at her.

She gave neither assent nor dissent voluntarily; she had no right. She stood withdrawn, not enough for rudeness, but enough to have no part in his action.

He looked at her downcast eyes, her silent lips, her face with its unintentional protest; and he dropped the gold piece into his pocket again. "A fellow would find it merely a pleasure to go straight with the 'little brick' beside him," he thought.

"You took your New England conscience out of your pocket that time," he said. "Didn't you?"

"Did I?" she asked. "It was not to show it to you, Mr. Bridges. I have not the right."

"Oh, I know it wasn't meant for me. I caught a glimpse though. I wish I had one just like it."

So they went from place to place, getting better and better acquainted. But his knowledge of Grace Longley was altogether too good to have allowed him to presume upon it to treat her cavalierly, or familiarly, had he been so disposed, which he was not. He held her in a kindly respect, not far from reverence. But as to falling in love with her, he never put the case to himself in that way.

Both he and his mother found friends as they went on; and these took time and thoughts.

It was January, the day after they had all come to Venice. Mrs. Bridges was fatigued by her day's excursion, and Grace insisted upon remaining with her. Bridges had gone off in a gondola with some people he had met. Grace had been reading to his mother, and now that Mrs. Bridges had fallen asleep, the girl had come out into the sitting room, leaving the bedroom door partially open that she might hear if the sleeper aroused. She herself was wide awake, and she began a letter to her mother.

After a time a sound entirely different from the looked-for noises of the place startled her. She listened. Something was wrong. Her instinct was to go to find out what it was. But it was unpleasant to go through the corridors and into the office alone in the late evening; and to ring and bring some one to the door would awaken Mrs. Bridges. She resisted her impulse, and forcing herself to sit still, wrote another page of her letter. But fear grew upon her, until at last she arose and went softly out of the room.

When she returned, her face was like marble. The fear that had been vague as an overshadowing had become the grip of terror. Two gondolas had collided in one of the narrower canals. Three men had been thrown into the water; and one, it was feared, was drowned. Thus far they had not succeeded in resuscitating him; but the physicians had not yet given up working over him. He had been staying at the

hotel, and was to be brought here. The accident had been to the party with whom Bridges had gone. No one could tell yet the name of the gentleman probably drowned.

Grace believed that she could tell it. She gave orders to be immediately informed when the name was learned, and went back to the sitting room.

It was he who was dead. Whenever she tried not to believe it, the thought forced itself upon her again. She sat motionless, her head bowed. There came before her as in pictures all that he had done for her, just for kindness, because she was alone and dependent, and all that he had been to her. She had never planned life with him; she only dimly realized as she sat there what it was going to be without him, the loneliness, the dreariness, the tyranny of it, now that he would not be there to stand between. But this was nothing to the realization that she would never hear his voice again, that his smiling eyes would never look into hers, his quick fun never make sad moments bright. She sat as if the waters of despair had overwhelmed her. To her it seemed hours, if she thought of time at all. But it was not very long before some one knocked at the door.

It had come. Here was the messenger to tell her he was drowned.

She walked to the door, laying a steadying hand on the table by the way. She would go outside and listen to the word; the poor mother must not be wakened abruptly. She must be told lovingly of her desolation. Grace opened the door.

"It's good to find you up, Miss Longley," said Bridges' cheerful voice. "You came pretty near not seeing me again. Why! Did you hear about the accident? I thought I'd come and tell you I was all right, lest you and mamma should have heard about it. Why, Miss Longley—why, what is it?"

For on seeing him she had gone backward, and as he entered the room and shut the door, she stood motionless, her look devouring his face, her eyes, her whole face radiant. He stood a moment, looking at her.

"I—I thought you were drowned!" she gasped.

"Oh, no, nobody is drowned; he's coming round all right. But—" He stood amazed, still staring at her. "Why, the little brick loves me!" he said to himself. And with the knowledge of this, there came to him, all in a rush, another knowledge, that this love was a beautiful thing to him, and what he longed for, although he had not known it before. He reached her with a step, and took her in his arms.

She struggled to release herself. He knew that she was utterly unaware of what her face had told him.

"Would you have cared very much if I had been?" he whispered, his face against hers.

She was still struggling to release herself. "You must not think me foolish and try to comfort me," she said. "Ever since my father's death anything like an accident terrifies me. You are very good. I am calmer now. Please let me go, Mr. Bridges."

But he held her fast. "You mustn't get over it," he said. "I don't mean ever to let you. You are the

loveliest, dearest girl in the world; and don't you see I'm asking you to marry me? I'm not good enough, but I want you. If you don't say, 'yes,' I shall be tempted to wish I had been drowned." For the longer he held her, the dearer she seemed to him.

She was trembling, but she had ceased to struggle; and she hid her face on his shoulder.

He lifted it to look into her eyes. "Haven't you a kind word for me, little brick?" he whispered. "I've called you pet names in my heart a long time, and a good many other things you've not known, nor I either at first. Do you love me?"

"I do," she said. "But—" He kissed her before she could finish. Then after a little, she asked, "But I—I always thought you cared for Dorothy?"

"Dorothy is as beautiful and good and lovable as ever," he answered her; "and I love her still." Grace tried to draw away from him, but he would not let her, and went on cheerfully: "But if Dorothy should marry that highflier over there with the castles and the titles; or if she should marry—anybody else, it would not break my heart one little bit. Why! Don't you trust me, my love?"

"I do perfectly," she whispered, and put her arms about his neck.

"Sit down here and tell me about it," he answered.

After a while she said to him: "You know I can't marry you soon. Mamma must have my money until Ned gets on further."

"Do you think I shall neglect your mother, Grace?"

"But I shouldn't like my husband to——"

"Ah, your husband! That's the way I like to hear you talk. What a happy husband you are going to make me, little brick."

They sat and talked so long that Mrs. Bridges aroused, and called to know what was going on all this time?

"Sha'n't we tell her on the spot, and have it over?" asked Bridges.

"Yes, I would rather," answered Grace.

He led her into the room where his mother, only half awake, lay and stared at them; and there he announced the good news.

But Mrs. Bridges frowned. "So, that's why you wanted her to go everywhere with you, was it, Charley?" she asked. "Why couldn't you have taken that bright Miss Osborne, and left Miss Longley to me? Nobody'll ever suit me so well; and I suppose you won't let her wait on me any more?"

"I'm thinking of waiting on her myself," he said smiling.

"Men are always so selfish," retorted Mrs. Bridges turning her face away. "Well, I'll go to sleep now and forget my troubles until to-morrow."

Mr. Bridges, Sr. writing to Charley on receipt of the news was triumphant in his joy, and avowed to his son that this secret hope was the especial reason why he had wanted them to extend their trip. "I knew you couldn't see her every day, with no business to

interfere, Charley," he wrote, "and not find out what a dandy girl she is."

But after the letter was posted, he sat awhile in his office going over the matter.

"It's going to make a mighty difference in the house, having the little girl out of it," he mused. "Marm'll take to her tantrums again, and I sha'n't even have Charley to talk 'em over with. But then, there's the other side of it. Suppose she'd married the red-headed feller—poor feller—that hung on to her so last summer—where would we all have been then? Bless my soul—yes! Then, Charley will settle near us, I guess. I'll build the little girl just the house she wants. She'll be trotting in often, and give the marm many a smooth down, I shouldn't wonder. It's funny, she seemed like a daughter to me from the first day I saw her at my table. It's mighty good news; and Charley's a good feller, or he shouldn't have her. Lucky I don't want to hinder it though. How'd I do it?" he ended with a chuckle of satisfaction.

XXXVII

HONORS TO BURN

THE year at college was going on well with a great deal of hard work, and plenty of fun to cheer it. In this fun, as in many of her studies, Dorothy was again a leader; quick in device, and skilful in execution, she gave many an amusing hour to her associates; and those whom she led in her classes were amazed at her versatility. It was a year upon which she always looked back with satisfaction.

One December day going into Priscy's room, she found the latter writing a letter, and was about to withdraw, not to interrupt her, but Priscy said,

"Don't go; I've finished." And slipping it into an envelope, she addressed and sealed it. Then looking up at her friend, she said with a blush: "It's to Lord Hervey, Dorothy. He wanted me to answer his letters. He writes interesting ones."

"I'm sure he must, Pell-Mell. And that's the reason," she went on, "why you've been too busy sometimes to help on the fun. You've been having a little private fun of your own?"

"You needn't laugh at me," said the girl. "I'm not doing things secretly," she added. "Mamma knows he has written to me; and papa, too. They don't object to my answering."

"It's only I who do things on the sly, Pell-Mell,

like taking morning walks with strange old gentlemen, and such things. I'm more glad than I can say, dear child. He's a splendid fellow; and as handsome as one could wish for."

"Why, Dorothy, there's nothing to be glad, or sorry about, only a very simple and harmless correspondence. You remember he was interested in the life in girls' colleges in America; and there's enough about that to tell him."

"As you like it, dearie. Nothing to congratulate you about? Then, I shall congratulate Lord Hervey, because you write a very amusing letter." And she kissed the young scribe, and smiled as she did so.

"You think that?" questioned Priscy brightening. "He says he is coming to America again sometime."

Dorothy knew this; and that Lord Dalkeith was coming also. The latter had not written to her. But his look and tone as he had parted from her on the steamer and told her that he was coming, assured her it was true. She thought of it often; and sometimes she wished that she did not.

In the Christmas vacation Lulu Bromley paid a short visit to Brookehurst. She was to marry Rex the following June. They all loved her more the more they saw of her.

The middle of January as four of the college girls came back from a brisk walk on the fresh snow of the night before and through radiant sunshine and air sparkling with vigor—a winter's day too severe for all

but the robust in health—two of them were met by the announcement of visitors.

"Oh, I know who they are," said Dorothy. "I've been expecting them. And without glancing at the cards that she took from the maid, she turned hastily into the reception room, her eyes bright, her cheeks glowing with the nip of the sharp wind. "Come, Pell-Mell," she said over her shoulder. "They've asked for you, too." So assured of the visitors was she that she took several steps into the room, and exclaimed, "This is good, you dear boys!" Then suddenly she halted, abashed. "Oh!" she said, her face scarlet, "I didn't wait to look at the cards. I'm expecting my two brothers to-day; and I thought they had come."

"Don't be too much disappointed, Miss Brooke," said Lord Dalkeith coming forward and taking her hand. "I don't see how we can take the rôle of brothers; but we'll make up for it as well as we can."

By this time Lord Hervey had turned from welcoming Miss Pell who had followed her friend with acuteness of consciousness and demureness of manner, and was greeting Dorothy.

She laughed. "It was a case of leaping before one looked," she said. "But it was well I lighted on safe ground. Supposing you had been utter strangers, I should have called you 'dear boys' just the same."

"But nobody else could have appreciated it so much," returned Hervey with an amusement that helped her to recover herself, although her embarrassed color lingered.

This was the beginning of a series of visits from the two young men, who informed themselves sufficiently upon college rules to escape information upon the subject by their hostesses. But the visits, although according to regulation, aroused much interest and discussion, especially among the juniors and seniors, in which two classes Priscy and Dorothy respectively belonged.

"The little Pell girl is deep in, anybody can see," announced Susie Codman to a group of eager listeners. "I've not a doubt about her. That will be a match; for Lord Hervey considers the whole college worthy of his approval because she's in it."

"Where did you get all that knowledge?" inquired Clara Morton who had not outgrown her fondness for asking why.

"It's printed in capitals," declared Mattie Winters with her fondness for being on the popular side. "It's not even he who runs may read; you may stand still and read, if you only look."

"Then, since you're so well instructed, tell us about Dorothy," persisted Clara. "After all, it is she who is of most importance to us girls. It will be pretty good to be able to say of her, 'our classmate, the countess'. But how shall we feel if in the days to come, we can incidentally remark, 'Ah! our friend, the duchess'?"

"You couldn't live without your joke, Clara," snickered Dora Wilson.

Clara laughed too. Then she said: "But in a way, it's a fact. Who knows about Dorothy?"

Nobody did.

"Whether she's deep in, or too deep to let us see whether she's in or not," declared Susie Codman, "not a girl in college can tell you, not even her nearest and dearest Priscy Pell. Sometimes I think she doesn't know herself. I'll wager on Lord Dalkeith, though. He means business."

"I suppose we all used to think it was going to be Ned Longley," said Clara. "But he has enough otherwise on hand now, poor fellow. He's been having a tremendously hard time of it, and has now for that matter, and is likely to have it for a good while to come. But I'm glad he has come back to college to finish out his time and get his good and regular standing. He graduates in the class next to his own, to be sure; but he'll come off well, and he's plucky to do it."

"I heard he had been studying all the year at odd times to keep up," added Dora Wilson. "He is a splendid fellow; but he hasn't half a chance."

"He has a good big chance to show himself a hero," declared Susie Codman with emphasis. "And he is doing it."

"So he is, Susie," said a new voice behind her. And, suddenly, the girls perceived that Dorothy had joined them. After acquiescing in this assertion, they turned the subject into the safe channel of the day's studies, and in another minute Dorothy had gone on to the library whither she was bound when she had taken the group on her way.

"How much do you suppose she heard?" asked Mattie Winters.

"Nothing at all except what we were saying about Ned Longley," assured Susie. "If she had, she would have spoken."

Ned Longley had returned to college to finish the short time remaining of his course, and graduate. He had determined to do this for his own satisfaction. As Dora Wilson had learned, he had kept up his studies in part, and now he could keep on with his other work enough to hold his place there. Mr. Harris, and the firm, wished him to finish his college work; and Mr. Bridges had been kindness itself. "Get your diploma, or whatever it is," he had said. "I'll be proud to have you. Don't you see, you're to be in the family now?" To do this and make up his other work, Ned needed only to give his summer vacation. He had had a long one the previous summer, and he foresaw that he should not be in trim for enjoyments this year.

For he knew of Dalkeith's visits to Dorothy, and of the increasing earnestness of his attentions to her. Ostensibly, he and Hervey were traveling in the United States. But with the exception of a few weeks in California, their trips could not have been extended; for the travelers seemed to be always turning up at Ridgemore. Nothing was more evident to Longley than that Dorothy was lost to himself. Last year he had put aside the suggestion as a possibility which distressed him. Now he was compelled to face it as a coming certainty. The bonds holding him back from

her had tightened, rather than loosened. The loss of Grace's salary had not been wholly made up by the increase in his own in both editorial work, and the other. The plays were winning a little reputation, but no money to speak of yet. As to the stocks—he did not want to think of those. He told himself that he was not fair to Dorothy. Was she to give up everybody just because he loved her? He would not be dog in the manger.

But in his efforts not to be so, he grew thin and strained.

He sometimes went to see her, to discuss their work, and to talk of his mother and Grace and the good things that used to be, and the success they hoped to arrive at. But Dalkeith saw her far oftener than he did. And Ned knew it.

The evening of the day that Dorothy had heard the girls commenting upon Longley as she passed them, she sat late in her room alone. In her life she had had many battles to fight with herself; and in general she had fought them through bravely, and for the most part had come out victor.

But she had never had a struggle like this. She had not known before how vain she was, how fond, not of wealth especially, but of the long generations of power and prestige the inheritance of which was open to her to share; she told herself it was a greater ambition than she had ever known. And yet that evening, looking into her own heart, Dorothy said that she would gladly help Ned work for his mother. But she knew absolutely that he would never allow it. He

was a very dear fellow; but he was too proud. They would both be happier if he were not.

But the voice whispering its suggestions was insisting that she look at things only as they were. Ned was impossible to her. Then why refuse one she liked, because she could never have one she loved? Lord Dalkeith was not having a perfectly easy time in making sure of her acceptance, and she would therefore have all the more power with him if she gave it. He had not asked her yet; but he would. Should she not accept him?

She sat into the small hours, thinking. It seemed to her that a gulf she had never known had opened in her soul. She did not know whether what she saw as she looked into it was the bottom of it, or how deep it was, or whether she would ever leap down into it? She had a strange revelation. She perceived that to carry out her purpose, she would not climb, but descend; that this ambition was below, not above her. She thrust the knowledge from her angrily; and it departed, as do all scorned revelations.

As the college year drew near its end, it became evident that the first of the class honors would go to Dorothy. And, perhaps not strangely, considering all things, those in Longley's class would go to him. Dorothy was pleased for them both. But she secretly wondered where her delight in all these things had gone?

In the spring Grace had been married abroad. The

prospect of a wedding which she could supervise restored Mrs. Bridges to happiness.

"Of course you have no home to be married from," she said. "And as Charley lives with us, you couldn't be married from his. It would look as if you were a nobody. Yes, as Charley says, the American embassy in Paris will be just the place for the wedding. I'll see that you look like an heiress, Grace."

"But I'm not an heiress, and I don't want to look like one," answered the girl. She and Bridges had planned a quiet affair.

"The main thing is to get tied tight," he had said.

"You are going to do us credit," insisted Mrs. Bridges.

And even in her eyes, Grace did. The friends they found to invite to the ceremony, and those who came from curiosity to see the bride of the young millionaire, lent a brilliancy to the affair which gave the elder lady matter to refer to proudly for a long time afterward.

Kitty Hyde's affairs were prospering; and her hopes flourished again. One day she came to her two especial friends at Ridgemore and brought a letter from Dia Chesterdown.

"She misses you, Kitty," said Dorothy, pleased. "Some day you will go there and meet her. Or I think she wants to come back. She is homesick. She has come to understand herself in a strange land." A sudden thrill ran through her as she spoke. Would she, Dorothy, ever come to understand herself in a strange land?

Ridgemore Commencement was brilliant. Nobody grudged Dorothy the honors she had so fairly won, and bore so well. She had always been so kind and true to her fellow students that they loved her and enjoyed her triumph. Lord Dalkeith was most proud of all. He saw in her one to shine at court, one for whom no rank would be too high to be borne by her with graciousness. She answered his ideals, and he admired her profoundly. And he assured himself also that he was deeply in love with her, or he would not have opposed his grandfather's wishes in his marriage.

Class Day brought Dorothy still more triumphs. Words of loving praise fell upon her ears. Through it all she was observing how well Ned bore himself; she knew that she was reading his heart. Yet when he held her hand in leaving her, she felt that they reached out to each other across a gulf—that gulf!

That night as she sat alone thinking over the day's triumphs, she suddenly seemed to be leaning over the gulf again, looking into it. It was so dark.

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed angrily. And she went to bed.

XXXVIII

MRS. BROMLEY IS HAPPY

THE song of the birds awoke Lulu Bromley. She must have been hearing them in her sleep; for she had been dreaming of that exhibition day at Hosmer Hall one May so long ago, when Dorothy's little drama, *"The Birds' Boycott,"* had been given, and Lulu had done so much to help out its success. Now, as she lay between sleeping and waking that June morning, the real notes of some of the birds of the play floated to her from the trees about her grandmother's home, and in the woods near by. She caught the cheery song of the robins, the whistling of the cardinal birds, the dainty notes of the bluebirds. And there were the song sparrows as cheerful as the summer morning itself, the trills of the towhees, the high, sweet notes of the Baltimore orioles; and there was a brown thrasher—but by the time Lulu had picked out his song from the chorus, she was wide awake and remembering that that day of the May exhibition had been the turning of the tide in her life, the day in which her ability and pluck and success had won her grandmother's approval. The gift of the little bank-book had followed, and had enabled Lulu to finish her course at Hosmer Hall, and by still doing some work in coaching, and otherwise, although not toiling as

she had done, to help her brother Harold into college where he was making a good record. Her father had at last found work that was giving him at least a living.

From the day of that exhibition, four years ago, her grandmother had been uniformly kind and generous to her, for she loved her capable granddaughter. After her graduation Lulu had determined to spend one year with her, to return so far as she could, the kindness and affection she had received.

All things in her life had been hard, until she had met Dorothy Brooke. But the world had brightened since Dorothy had loved her. It might be all a fancy that the dear girl had had anything to do with it. And yet but for *"The Birds' Boycott,"* how much of it all would have come to her? Most of all, but for Dorothy, where would Rex have been?

Yes. And where would he be now in a few hours? Here. For to-morrow was to be her wedding day, and there were yet many things to do in preparation.

But by this time revelling in the songs of the birds and her own happy memories, she was busily dressing. And in this joyous mood she met the day.

"Good-morning, Lulu," said Mrs. Bromley as the girl came running down stairs. "I'm so happy thinking of what you're going to have," she added as she kissed her, "that I don't dare stop and remember the hole there will be in my life when you go out of it."

"Why, grandmamma! I go out of your life! Don't you know I'm going to bring Rex in?"

The old lady sighed. Then she returned to her

cheerfulness, and began to consult with Lulu as to how the furniture in the drawing-room ought to be placed for the ceremony the next day; and how the gardener should arrange the flowers, not hot-house plants, but summer blooms from the open air.

"As to the furniture, grandmamma," said the girl; "we can't have much, can we? There'll be so many people; our friends have mounted up so."

"You're not exclusive enough, Lulu," said Laura Arnold when she came over later from her own home, a mile away. "You ought to keep to people that will count."

"You silly little snob!" muttered Mrs. Bromley to herself as she went about the room.

"Now, there's Mabel White," pursued Laura unconscious of one listener's comment. "What do you want her for? She doesn't amount to anything. She'll never be any help to you."

"Mabel is one of my dear friends," cried Lulu flushing angrily. "And she amounts to a great deal, as they'll tell you at Hosmer Hall. She has made a very successful teacher, and will do still better next year. Do you mean because she has no money? She has as much as I have, anyway. Don't make me despise you, Laura."

"I suppose you think you can afford to do that now," returned the other making sure that Mrs. Bromley was out of the room. "But don't let us quarrel," she added. "I've come over to congratulate you, and to see how things are getting on. The house will look lovely. I'd like to make a few suggestions

though. Only, I suppose grandmamma would be angry?"

Instead of doing this, however, Laura returned to Mabel White.

"Since you are to marry Rex Brooke," she said, "I should think you would take Dorothy's part, and not bring the two together here, and make it so unpleasant for your sister-to-be." And as Lulu stared at her in astonishment, she went on: "What a conveniently short memory you have, Lulu. But of course you do remember what a fuss Mabel made between Grace and Ned and Dorothy, because she wanted to keep all these to herself, and make them not care for Miss Brooke. "I should think you'd take Dorothy's part," she repeated.

"Oh, that!" echoed Lulu scornfully. "I'll wager Dorothy has forgotten all about it. And Mabel has repented, I happen to be aware. How did you find out about that affair, Laura?" she asked suddenly. "It was not given to the public."

"So, I'm one of the public? Thank you. I'm not out in the cold as to information though. But what do I care, anyway? Mabel will be nobody's rival in looks and dress. Is Grace coming with her new husband?"

"She says so," answered Lulu, her face brightening at the thought.

"And Priscy Pell and her swell Englishman? My goodness! If he'd seen her when she first came to school, she wouldn't have much chance of him. Somebody really ought to tell the poor fellow."

It was on Lulu's tongue to retort that, no doubt,

Laura would be happy to do this herself, if opportunity were given her. But she was not going to quarrel, or be hateful now, of all times. And she asked Laura's opinion of some arrangement of the flowers.

The latter brightened at being consulted, and went on to give so much advice, unasked, that Lulu repented of her good nature.

"How are you, grandmamma?" asked Rex Brooke that afternoon as he walked into the house. "You are to be my grandmamma to-morrow; so, why not begin at once?" And he kissed her. "It's so nice of you to be glad to see me, when I've come to make an end of Miss Bromley."

"Make an end of my granddaughter!" gasped the poor lady staring wildly at him.

"I did not say that," he returned, as grave now as ever Dorothy was when most amused.

Here Lulu came up behind Rex, and with her chin resting on his shoulder, looked laughingly at her grandmother.

"He means he is going to make an end of Miss Bromley, grandmamma; not of me. Don't you see I sha'n't be that any longer; I shall be—" Suddenly, she stopped in a fit of shyness, her face scarlet.

"Why don't you finish, Lulu?" he laughed. "In all this time, she has not grown used to 'Mrs. Brooke', grandmamma," he explained.

The old lady shook her finger at him warningly. "It's well she can make out your nonsense," she said,

"You'd wind me up in a net, so I could never get out of the meshes. You'd better be on your good behavior, sir."

"Yes, yes, indeed," he said; "on my very best, until after the knot is tied. Then we'll see."

"Yes, we shall see," said Mrs. Bromley. And with the words she doubled her fist and struck him lightly. Then, laughing, she ran off to some pressing duty.

As Lulu and Rex talked together in the summer twilight, they diverged from jest into earnest, and spoke of many things concerning their future.

"Is Dorothy rested from all she went through last week—Class and Commencement Day and the long strain before it?" asked Lulu, as at last she rose from the bench under the elm in the garden and turned with him toward the house. "How beautiful she looked both those days! And what a triumph in the class with so many bright girls in it! And Lord Dalkeith, Rex,—well, there's no doubt what he feels about her; I saw his eyes when he looked at her. Dorothy will have no end of honors. She must be very happy."

Rex paused in his walk. Lulu going on a few steps, perceived it, and turned back. She looked up at him in surprise while he still stood there, his brows knit, his eyes gazing into space at the picture in his mind. At last he turned to her.

"Lulu, there's something the matter with Doro. She ought to be happy; but I'm sure she is not. But you know her," he added with a sigh. "Nobody will ever get out of her what the trouble is—not even the *mater*. And if she fails, nobody can succeed.

THE OLD LADY SHOOK HER FINGER AT HIM WARNINGLY.

Doro is very bright, and very gay. You may not see anything wrong with her. But it's there."

"Dear Doro," said Lulu softly. "What can be amiss? Oh, Rex, I think you are mistaken."

"Perhaps I am," he answered, and turned to another subject.

XXXIX

A GUEST OF DISTINCTION

Lord Dalkeith had gone upon an excursion to the Lakes with some friends whom he had met in America. He did not intend to be gone long; for as he had said good-by to Dorothy on Class Day, he had added that he should see her again soon. He had spoken no further word; but his look and tones had told her everything. When next he came, and this would not be until after Rex's wedding, she would have to tell him her decision. Surely, that would not be difficult; her ambition was not dead. She had decided upon the wise course. She thought of Priscy's happy face. It was plain that Priscy really loved the young Englishman who was so devoted to her. There everything would turn out well. Dorothy was so glad for her friend.

That season Colonel Pell took a cottage at Newport; and he and Mrs. Pell were ready to entertain Lord Hervey when he should accept their invitation to visit them. For when Priscy returned home at the summer holidays, she learned why she had been so readily allowed to correspond with this young man, and why his attentions to her had met with no comment or supervision from her father, or her step-mother.

That summer morning in which he told her of his love and asked her to marry him, he told her also that

the previous autumn, before she had sailed for home, he had asked her father's consent to their marriage, and permission to try to win her.

"And you have really cared about me all this time?" asked the girl.

"Longer than that," he answered. "I cared for you on the boat when your father would not introduce us, but waited for Mrs. Pell. Do you remember Miss Warner and the shuffleboard?"

Priscy laughed. "Did you know about that?" she asked.

"No, not at the time; but afterward. But now let us talk of how much you love me?"

"Yes," answered the girl with a sigh. Then she added resolutely, "But first I must tell you something."

"That can wait," he said trying to draw her toward him.

But she resisted. "I will never be engaged to you until I have told you," she said with a decision that he could not ignore. "It is something so important that when you have heard it, you may not want to marry me at all."

He turned cold. "You love somebody else?" he gasped.

"No, I do not," returned the girl in a tone that satisfied him.

"There's nothing else, I assure you," he declared. "I'm not afraid any longer. But do be quick. For I want to talk about—more important things."

"You will not consider this unimportant," said

Priscy turning to him a face so pale that his anxiety returned. He drew closer to her again, and looked at her, and waited in silence.

"Lord Hervey," she began, and her voice trembled, for she feared that her disclosure would affect this young man for whom she had learned to care much, "I was not always just as you see me now. I was a wild little thing once, very rough and untrained. And the reason was—my mother." She spoke the last two words almost in tears, yet determined to tell the truth, shielding her father all that was possible without taking from her mother one beautiful trait that she possessed. After the first moment she went on bravely, and gave him an outline of her child-life in its ignorance and pathos and courage. She told him of her grandfather now dead, and was careful to assure him that they had never suffered want, that her father had always generously supplied them with money. She told of her arrival at school, a girl whom nobody wanted, of what Dorothy had done for her, even to sharing her room and all her good things with her, and had at last reconciled herself—haughty little waif that she was—to the father who had come to long for her, as in her heart she did for him. "Yes, I must tell you all," she persisted, as seeing her emotion, he tried to prevent her. "I will not have between us something I should always be afraid you would find out, and be ashamed of me."

When she ceased speaking, she did not look at him, and he saw that she was trembling.

"You dear child!" he said taking her in his arms,

"I shall spend all my life trying to make it up to you—Pell-Mell, just as your father is doing."

"And so you really don't care?" she whispered with infinite relief as she nestled against him.

Mrs. Pell was dignified and took everything as a matter of course. But there was no doubt that she felt it a pleasant duty to introduce her step-daughter's betrothed to friends and acquaintances; and to entertain him at social functions which introduced Priscy and at the same time honored the guest. Priscy seemed to radiate joy, except upon brief occasions when she would recall that it would not do to allow Lord Hervey to imagine that she cared too much for him.

"It is a real love match," said her father to himself. "Priscilla is not thinking of his position; she is absorbed in him. He's a good fellow." Then he stood pondering, the bright look gone from his face. "So it was with her mother," said memory to him. "In her was no thought of what I could bring her, or could do for her; it was all of me." He sighed. "I wonder if she knows that I am trying to do my best for our daughter, and loving her my best?" he said.

All went delightfully until Lord Hervey began to talk of a speedy wedding. Then he met with opposition from an unlooked-for source.

"Be married before I graduate!" echoed Priscy. "Not finish my college course? Not a bit of it! Don't you want me to know anything before I go over there to meet learned people? At least I shall make the best I can of myself." And when her lover asserted

that she was already more than everything she could possibly need to be, and assured her that he could by no possibility wait another year, she answered him, "Then, in that case, you will have to take somebody else."

"Cruel Priscy! Never!" he cried.

And that settled it.

XL

THE CALL OF THE DRAMA

"Dear Kitty," wrote Dorothy,

"I hope you will like to come with me to the rehearsal of the new play Ned Longley and I are getting out. It's only the first rehearsal, you know. Everything will be very raw. But the manager wants us to see it. He says he has one or two suggestions that we can better appreciate if we get an idea of how the play will seem on the boards.

"You know that our play which was brought out this spring had quite a run. Everybody says it did well. But we had to sell it outright to get it produced at all; and we got very little for it. I think it probable we shall have to do the same with this one. But it helps to open the way, a very slow way, Kitty. But we must not be discouraged, you and we.

"Mother and I are coming up to town the night before; and in the morning we are to do a little shopping. Can't you come and lunch with us, and we will all go to the rehearsal together? I want you, not only for the pleasure of your company, but also to know what you think of the play. I should like your judgment of it; and so would Ned.

"And I want mother to meet you; she has heard much of you."

"That's always the way she puts it," thought Kitty reading the note for the third time. "If Dorothy Brooke has anything good on hand, she is never happy until she can give somebody else a share of it. As if she didn't know what it is to my work to be brought forward into the sight of managers and presented as a promising amateur ready to become a professional. She'll contrive that in some way, or get Mr. Longley to do it. I know her. I do hope her mother will approve of me," she added. "I'll behave my very best. And I mustn't forget to take Dia's last letter for her to read—where she calls me 'her dear sister'."

Ned hoped a good deal in the way of reputation from the new play, since the one that had been running had done so well. Could he have afforded it, he would have held out for a good price, and it was possible that, eventually, they might have secured it. They were both so young, that under other circumstances it might have been wise to hold out for better terms; they could have afforded to wait.

But not now. It was true that Grace had sent home the greater part of her year's salary for her mother. Mrs. Bridges had declared that her daughter-in-law should have clothes fit for a Bridges, and her husband had contributed gladly. Grace had been chafed and humiliated at not being allowed to buy her own trousseau, neither she nor Charley would have been disturbed at its simplicity. But if she had spent all her own money, Mrs. Bridges would not have been content; she would have added to it. So, Grace allowed that lady to deck her out as she pleased and

sent her own money for her mother. Charley Bridges also had sent Ned his check for a handsome amount because he did not want Mrs. Longley to suffer for his happiness. But Ned had returned this gracefully and gratefully, with the assurance that he would call upon him if need came.

Yet there was more need at the moment than he would confess to any one. His mother was actually somewhat better. If she should continue to gain—which was not sure—until she reached a certain point; from that point her progress would be much more sure and rapid. She might never even reach it, but there was hope. Until she did, however, and for some time beyond, she must have a special boarding-place, because the surroundings and associations of a hospital would discourage her. And she must have the best nurse that could be secured; a physician high in skill, and reputation, and fees, in constant attendance; a famous surgeon watching the case, with examinations and reports of progress. Yes, Dorothy and Ned must sell this play outright, if a better way did not open at once; that is, they must do it, if she were willing. When had she not agreed to anything she believed best for him? In all probability this would be the last play they would collaborate. Everything would be broken off when she married Dalkeith.

"The actors seem to take hold of it well," he said as he greeted Mrs. Brooke and her two companions. "I've been talking with them. They approve it; and that's hopeful. We'll take seats here, if you like. The draft from that wing is not pleasant, even in June.

Mrs. Brooke, I hope you are prepared to make great allowances? Things will be so rough; the parts not half learned; some reading them off; and no end of other roughnesses. But if we can only get you enough into the spirit of the thing, to drop these points out of sight and be swept into the play, that will be our victory." And he nodded smilingly at Dorothy, thinking as he did so that she looked preoccupied.

The manager appeared; and the introduction of Kitty was accomplished. He shook hands with her pleasantly, although with the air of having something on his mind, and remarked that some day she might tread these very boards, and make a great hit for him and herself. Who could tell? Then, as he was about turning away, he took a second look at her. "Face, figure, voice, good," he commented to himself. "That may come true, after all. I'll keep her in mind."

And in time it really did come true."

At the last minute Norcross came in, having been invited by the manager. He was embarrassed at sight of Kitty Hyde with Miss Brooke; but he carried it off well, and the greater part of the time kept himself beside Longley who was frequently in consultation with the manager.

With allowances for conditions, the rehearsal went off well; and, which promised favorably for the play, the actors themselves grew more interested in it as it developed, and showed flashes of spirit not usual in early rehearsals. Mrs. Brooke watched in silence, full of pride in her daughter's ability; Kitty was open in her praise; Norcross did not stint his approval. He

had no intention of being out with Longley, however cool the latter might be toward him.

Dorothy was grave, and very quiet. She had come across that day in the papers the announcement of Lord Dalkeith's return to the city the following week. He would come to Brookehurst.

And was she not ready for him? The gulf into which she still looked down was aglow with brilliancy. She would not try to fathom the depths. Why should she ever descend into those? She struggled to keep her thoughts upon the play. She had come for that. She, as well as Ned, remembered that it might be their last collaboration. At first she really watched and listened. Then between her and the actors and their words, there came the enactment of an incident which she had heard of but never seen, when she was in Scotland. Why should it come now? What had it to do with her, she asked herself?

Some one whom she had met there, a lady in speech and training, the wife of a tenant upon a nobleman's land—as so many farmers there are—had told her one of the customs of the country. One day the butler of the nobleman, this lady's landlord, had come to her house from his master, and ordered her to withdraw and give up the whole place, except some out-of-the way upper rooms, while he took possession of everything, and served there a lunch that he had brought prepared for his master and the guests, who while out hunting would stop at the house to refresh themselves. No permission was asked from her, no question was raised of whether such arrangement

would not be distasteful to her—as it was—all was taken for granted, a privilege assumed as a right. Yet that farmer paid his rent as scrupulously as any tenant in America. A wave of pride swept over Dorothy as she recalled that no landlord in America would dare to do such a thing to the humblest tenant, nor would be allowed by law to do it.

But it was among the people who did this thing, and others of the same tenor, as matters of course that Dorothy was going. She had told the story wonderingly to Lord Dalkeith; and he had taken it as strange that she even wondered. She did not understand, he had answered her. The duke, much as she admired him, was among those who liked things to go on because they had always been so. Against this spirit Dorothy could never hope to do anything. She was not going into wider opportunities. She would have an abundance of privileges. But as to the opportunities, these were here, in her own land. She was going into a reservation there, very large and beautiful; but around it would be a line that she could not pass over. The people among whom she was going would never come to think as she did; she would be obliged to follow their opinions whether she liked them or not. All the splendid deeds of the past belonging to the noble family that it was her purpose to enter were in the past. But she herself was living to-day. She belonged to the present; she believed in it and in the future. Had she loved this man who was coming to woo her, as Priscy loved Lord Hervey, everything would be different; these questions would never have come to

her, as they had not come to her dear Pell-Mell. Dorothy herself was going to a very high place, and to an extent, she would look well in it; and people might think so of her.

Yet there would be something wrong.

Then as she thought of it there came into her mind a quaint but expressive word for something that did not answer the purpose for which it was made—a misfit. And with its coming she recognized that as mistress of title and lands with the tenure of which she was not in harmony, that name would apply to herself.

Was this her fate? Was it to be a misfit that she, Dorothy Brooke, had been born and trained? The splendors and obligations of a high rank with love thrown out, to be worn upon the American heart of a girl who believed in the traditions and hopes and aspirations of her own country, with manhood and womanhood, and not rank, as its ideal? What splendors, what prestige could make up for her freedom, for her life lived in her own way—yes, and for hard work, if it were the work she loved?

All at once there leaped up in her heart that wonderful sentence, "If a man should give the whole substance of his house for love, it would utterly be condemned." Where did it come from? Ah, she remembered. And she saw what it meant to her. How was she going to get rid of Ned Longley—to get rid of loving him? She must do this if she married another man.

Then sitting there, seemingly watching what was

going on before her, but really seeing only the stage of her own life, something tall and strong and resistless rose up within her. In the uplift of it she saw the gift that God had given her; and she rejoiced in it. She saw the path that He would have her tread, and for all its thorns and stones, it shone as it led upward. She saw herself throw away like baubles the fetters that as a prize she had been ready to bind upon herself, and stand forth in a free and beautiful life.

Then, all in a moment, the gulf at her feet with its brilliant illumination had closed. And there before her was an ascent, with no pitfalls, and the sunshine on its top!

She laughed aloud. The others looked at her in surprise. For in the play that part was pathetic. But to her freedom had come; joy had bloomed in her heart.

"How do you think it goes?" asked Longley coming up to her when the rehearsal was over.

"Oh, Ned, it was a great success."

Her mother looked at her. She perceived that Dorothy was speaking of something else; and that she was smiling softly to herself.

XLI

LONGLEY VISITS MR. CHESTERDOWN

"GRACE and Charley came to see me yesterday, Ned," said Mrs. Longley the week following the rehearsal. Her son listened in secret amusement and pleasure. Then, his mother had adopted Bridges on the spot? She liked him. "They got in only the day before," pursued Mrs. Longley. "Grace would not wait over a day to come; and he did not want to do it either. They cheered me up, she added smiling. "They brought me fruit and flowers enough to last me a month—if they would keep. But I think there will be no difficulty in disposing of them. To hear Charley talk, you'd have thought that I was to be perfectly well by next week at the latest. It really did make me feel better."

"He's a good fellow," said Ned heartily.

"Yes; and so amusing. He's not handsome, but you like to look at him; he seems to enjoy life."

"How was Grace looking, mamma?"

Mrs. Longley's expression deepened to a joy almost solemn as she answered:

"Oh, so well. And, Ned, you know Grace never talks about things; but I saw happiness shining in her eyes and heard it ringing in the tones of her voice. And she suits him exactly; I saw that, too. She seems

to be liked by the family, which is a great deal. Charley says his father is building a house for them, or rather, it is for Grace, and he is to be allowed to live in it during good behavior. He was making me laugh by saying that she is always the one consulted about plans and decorations and everything. If he wants anything, he has to suggest it to her, and she gets it. The only thing he had his own voice in, he said, was the garage. He described my room, Ned. It has a southern exposure and the finest view in the house. It is large, and is to be warm in winter, with windows to give abundant draft in summer. I am to come and take possession as soon as the house is finished; and the longer I possess, if I stay always, the better they will be pleased. Grace sat and listened to him smilingly. But when he came to tell me how the room was to be furnished, she laughed outright—that merry laugh of hers that we have not heard for so long, Ned. 'I think, Charley, I know better than you do what mamma likes,' she said. 'Is that so?' he asked with a side look at me as he joined in the fun. It must be a large house," added Mrs. Longley.

"It's quite a mansion," answered Ned. "I have seen it. I've been a little consulted, too, as I was supposed to know Grace's tastes, being her brother. The old gentleman is very happy. He said he had never seen another girl he would have liked for a daughter-in-law so well as Grace. So, she is happily settled; and I am so glad. She deserves it."

The mother's hand stole into her son's, and for a few minutes both sat silent. No hint of his sacrifice

had ever been given her; but she needed none; for a long time she had understood everything. Did not he, too, deserve happiness?

"The doctor gave me a good word about you the other day, mamma," he said brightly.

"Yes, yes, my dear boy, I'm coming out all right," she answered. But she did not look at him as she usually did with like assertion. Her eyes were dim with unshed tears. How was he coming out? Grace had given her accounts of the previous summer abroad; she knew the rumors about Dorothy's coming engagement; and she knew what the girl was to Ned. But words only made things harder to bear; she would not speak them. He knew what she felt.

But after they had sat talking awhile, and he had questioned carefully concerning her needs and comforts, and had told her how he was getting on with Mr. Harris, how well he seemed to suit Mr. Bridges, Sr., no doubt, partly on account of Grace, and how the coming play would be successful, unless some untoward accident interfered, she broke out abruptly:

"Ned, I am sure, *sure* that your father did not die an absolutely poor man. It's of no use to tell me otherwise. It's too late to do anything, if it ever could have been done. But it is not your father's heedlessness, or inefficiency which has put us into this place. It is some dishonesty."

"You may be right, mamma. Sometimes I feel that you are. But we can get hold of no evidence. If there are, or were papers, Chesterdown took them, or has them. There's no way out that I can see. And so,

don't dwell upon it; for the more we do, the harder we shall take it."

Yet the following day when Longley sat in his room, trying to do some writing for Mr. Harris, this thought returned to him insistently, until he drove it away fiercely and returned to his work, feeling, however, that the best of his mood had been lost in the struggle. Grace was well provided for, whatever became of her investment. Some day he might be able to speak to Dorothy. But it would be a long time before his mother was secured, and then it would be too late. But for her, he would speak at once; he would not heed rumor; he would accept from her lips alone that she was engaged to Dalkeith. But this was all idle dreaming. With a desperation that had in it no small touch of despair, he buckled down to his editorial, putting into it a tinge of his own humor.

Having finished it, he put his papers into his father's secretary which, because Mr. Longley had used it so constantly, the son had taken for himself when the old home had been let. Again and again had this secretary been searched in the vain endeavor to discover papers or minutes of some kind to explain the disappearance of his father's property.

That day, however, as he pulled out a drawer to secure a paper that he had inadvertently pushed over the edge at the back, his eye was caught by a bit of white in a crevice between the boards. The secretary was very old, and of solid mahogany. He noticed now for the first time that a double back had been put

in during some repairs. This paper was between the original back and the lining. How it had got there was one of the mysteries not to be known until inanimate things are endowed with a voice. Probably, it had slipped over the back of the drawer in some hasty movement among the papers, and had been pushed behind the lining and completely hidden, until some recent jar of the secretary had caused it to slip against the crack and into view. The important question though, was not how it came there, but what it was? Ned found tools and soon brought it to light.

He stood studying the contents with an emotion he could not control. Had this discovery come too late to change his life?

He put the paper into an envelope, and depositing it with great care in the inner pocket of his coat, he waited in thought. "I must be very sure, very sure indeed," he said to himself, "before taking that step. Yes, I will consult him first."

By the next train he was on his way to the office of Mr. Bridges, Sr. There when the young man had told his errand and shown his paper, the elder stood holding it in his hand, reading it with absorbed attention and occasional irrepressible ejaculations.

"Bless my soul, what a find, Longley! Why, you're high and dry out of the mire now! How did the man dare to serve you such a trick? But that creature will dare anything, if he can make a dollar by it. Yes, yes, to be sure. You've hit it on the head. Who is the man that witnessed the signature?"

"He used to be our butler," said Ned.

"Can you put your hand on him? You may need him."

"I think he has gone to some friends of ours."

"Glad of it. I don't see how you can be better fixed," added Bridges returning to his scanning of the paper.

"I thank you so much, Mr. Bridges," said Longley. "I felt I was right; but I wanted your assurance. And now I'll take it to him at once."

"What!" cried Bridges putting out his other hand and holding the paper fast with both. "What did I understand you to say you'd do, young man?" And he looked quizzically at his visitor.

Ned repeated his statement.

Without replying, Mr. Bridges pushed a button beside his desk.

In a moment a boy appeared.

"Edgerly in?" asked his employer.

"Yessir."

"Send him to me."

"Yessir."

The boy vanished, and the stenographer appeared promptly.

"I want you to take this down on the typewriter without a mistake, Edgerly. And you'd better take a carbon copy. And, Edgerly, this paper is very valuable. If so much as a scratch happens to it, your official head will answer for it." The stenographer smiled. He was accustomed to Bridges' insistence upon accuracy, and to his kindness. "How long will it take? There's great haste," continued the other.

Edgerly named the time, and disappeared, carrying the paper.

"Take it easy, Longley," said the old gentleman noticing the young man's eagerness to be gone upon his errand. "My word for it, you're not wasting time. Why, bless my soul! You didn't intend to put the *original* into that fellow's hands, did you? No! No! A copy is good enough for Chesterdown—the only safe thing for him to touch, that is, the only safe thing for your interests."

Ned sank into his chair with genuine thanks, and assumed patience.

Mr. Bridges verified the copy. Then he handed it to Ned.

"Do you object to my keeping this for you to-night, Longley?" he asked earnestly, tapping the original which he was still holding. "You'll be going about quite a little perhaps for a day or so; and—well; I'd feel more comfortable about it. It shall go with my own papers, subject to your call at any moment."

Longley accepted the offer gratefully. Then he hesitated, and finally said: "It may seem strange to you, Mr. Bridges; but would you mind not speaking to Grace, or to anybody of this matter for a day or two?"

"Bless my soul, no! Mum's the word, Longley, as long as you like. But don't forget to tell me just what that fellow says. Wouldn't I like to be a fly on the wall! No, I'd rather be a mosquito, and sting him!"

When Longley returned to the city, it was too late to see Chesterdown that day. Office hours were over. Ned went to his own rooms. At the earliest hour in the morning possible, he would call upon the lawyer.

Then to Brookehurst—for whatever met him.

Mr. Chesterdown reading his morning mail in a leisurely mood was interrupted by a visitor.

"Ah, good-morning, Longley," he said looking up nonchalantly. "Take a chair. I'll be at leisure in a few moments."

"You will be at leisure immediately, Mr. Chesterdown," returned Longley walking up to him with a look which made the other rise and hastily gather his letters together, as he strove for composure.

Then he looked up.

"What is it?" he said hoarsely.

XLII

A NEW ASPECT OF AFFAIRS

"It is unfinished business," replied Longley looking through him, as it seemed to Mr. Chesterdown.

"Why, what unfinished business, Longley?" retorted the other with an air of astonishment. "Why, you must remember we have none. You refused my advice about those stocks—sound advice, as you have found out before this time. And I've not troubled myself about you since."

"Not at all, Mr. Chesterdown? Never in the least? Never in regard to any transaction between my father and yourself?" he added significantly.

His listener turned pale. But he drew himself up, and answered firmly: "No; of course, not. Transactions with your father, Longley, are scarcely up to date," he added scornfully.

"They can readily be brought so, Mr. Chesterdown. Consider, if you please."

The other shook his head. He had considered. And he had decided that his best game was what he called "bluff." He would defy the young fellow. Yet what had brought him here with such an air and tone?

"I have nothing to consider that has not been gone over more than once," he said in the same scornful manner. "You know that."

"But here is something that will have to be gone over still another time. Will you look at this?" said Ned. And he handed him the type-written copy of his own witnessed receipt. It was a thorough explanation of what had become of a generous amount of Mr. Longley's property.

In spite of his efforts, Chesterdown's hand trembled as he took it. He glanced at it. He did not need to read it for comprehension.

He stood for a full minute with it in his hand, struggling for self-command. He said to himself that "bluff" was a difficult game to play with this young fellow.

"Well?" he cried at last with a harsh laugh. "What do you make of this stuff that you seem to think so much of? It's of no account."

"I make of it exactly what you do, Mr. Chesterdown."

There was silence for a few moments. Then the lawyer said, pointing to the paper still in his hand:

"Type-written matter is of no account. I can't see who has been hoodwinking you with this. Who has?" he added sharply.

"Type-written matter is worth only what is behind it," returned Longley ignoring the insolent question.

"Ancient history!" sneered Chesterdown. But he was manifestly growing more uneasy. Again he stood silent, studying the figures. "You assume there is anything back of this flimsy thing?" he demanded striking with his forefinger the paper in his hand.

"Any figures upon which this—assumption is founded? Although it looks too rounded out, we will say, not to be largely the work of imagination. You deal a good deal in imaginations, I believe, Longley," he sneered.

"It is a verified copy of the original paper," returned the other icily.

"Ah! And you hold this original? You have it with you?" As he spoke, he took a step toward Ned; and his look was so fierce that the young man was glad of Mr. Bridges' foresight. It had perhaps saved a personal struggle most revolting.

"No," he answered. "It is not upon me."

Chesterdown broke into an insolent laugh. "So! so! A cock that will crow; but is afraid to fight! But you need have had no fear of me, young man. The whole matter is worth nothing, I say."

Another silence. Then Mr. Chesterdown asked, "Who has the original?"

"Mr. Bridges."

Still again silence, on Chesterdown's part evidently uneasy.

"Oh, well, Longley," he admitted at last. "Of course, there's some little mistake here, due to the excitement of that time, and the fact that some of the papers upon your father at the time of the accident were too blood-stained to be recognizable."

"Ah! The villain believed this one of them!" thought Ned. But he did not speak. He waited in a disconcerting assurance.

"I'll look this over carefully, Longley," pursued

the other. "I must go over the accounts and stocks and papers again, and compare with the *original,* you understand. I don't deal with, or even accept copies to work from. I am tremendously busy just at present. Still, I will give this matter my earliest attention. In a month or two I shall have something definite for you. I——"

"Mr. Chesterdown," broke in Longley, "in less than an hour I take a train it is absolutely necessary I do not miss. I believe that you would rather settle this matter out of court. I give you five minutes to decide. If by then you have not confessed the truth, and given me your written and signed word to make immediate restitution, I shall leave this office and put the whole business into the hands of Boyd and Tyler, with instructions to prosecute."

"But I don't see how——" began the other.

Longley took out his watch and in silence held it up to Chesterdown. It might be that this man had cost him the happiness of his life. Ned felt that he was dealing kindly with him. He deserved exposure, and it might be doing a wrong not to give it to him. Yet if that could be avoided, it should be. When the other had read the time, Ned withdrew the watch and stood looking at it, a silent menace that every moment grew more terrible to Chesterdown. Boyd and Tyler were the lawyers most highly esteemed in the city for upright dealing and legal acumen.

When three minutes had passed, he flung himself into a chair, drew a pad of paper toward him, sat an instant with poised pen, then writing hastily and sign-

"I GIVE YOU FIVE MINUTES TO DECIDE."

ing his name, he dabbed the blotter over it, tore off the sheet, and passed it in silence to Longley.

The latter read the paper, folded it, and put it into his pocket.

"That will do, Mr. Chesterdown," he said rising. "Thank you. Good-morning."

The other did not answer.

Longley turned and went out.

As the door closed behind him, Chesterdown's head fell upon his folded arms on the table.

"How much can I save from the wreck?" he asked himself.

Then as he studied the matter he saw, even at a rough estimate, that he should not be so poor as he had left Mr. Longley's family; and he was making a good income. But he must cut down expenses. Dia would have to come home.

Longley was on the train to Dorothy. And with him was the evidence that, at last, he had the right to speak. Was he too late?

And then he came to a resolve. He would speak to her, however she might be placed. He had been a long first. She should listen to him, however things were. And in this purpose he fought back the ever attacking fear that he had lost her. If it were so, he would learn it from herself, and not from hearsay.

More from habit than because he cared to read then, he bought a newspaper on the train. Also, more from habit than from an anxiety that from to-day was to haunt him no more, he ran his eye down the stock

market and investment page, and as his glance caught the stock in which he was interested, he sat staring at it. After all the months in which he had hoped, and longed, and waited, and prayed when he was in great need sometimes, now, when they could get on well without it, the stock had risen! And the rise was so decided as to bring assurance that it was more than mere fluctuation. They would not be rich, as once he thought they had been; but every luxury was assured to his mother; and comfort to them all. Was it all too late? Or would it make any difference at all? Was he a cad to imagine that a beautiful girl like Dorothy could in any case choose him before Lord Dalkeith? But the more he questioned, the more he determined to try his fate.

At last came the town on the edge of which was Brookehurst.

The electric cars ran to within a little more than a mile of the estate. Should he take these, and walk the remaining distance? And arrive hot and dusty?

He took a carriage. As it drove in at the gates, a motor-car, from the garage as he supposed, had stopped at the front entrance of the house, and stood waiting. Was Dorothy going motoring, he wondered as he descended from his carriage?

XLIII

LORD DALKEITH

Lord Dalkeith had been taking a motor trip of several days, to see somewhat more of the country and enjoy the fine weather, as he could not do behind the windows of a train. Late one evening he had arrived within fifty miles of Brookehurst. He would go there the next day, as early as a visit was permissible.

The day dawned gray, threatening rain; but the sky soon cleared. It was with no foolish exhilaration of coming triumph that Dalkeith set out to learn his fate; for he had not the assurance of vanity. Yet he did not try to hide from himself that he was to offer to this girl a hand filled with the kind of treasure for which many men, and women also, had given the best of life, and even life itself. Dorothy was clever; she would see, indeed, she had seen all these advantages. In addition, he believed that he himself was not distastful to her.

As he passed through the town and came to a distant view of the house, he said to his chauffeur, "Drive very slowly; I wish to look about me." Also, he did not wish to arrive too early.

As he entered the gates of Brookehurst, he observed with appreciation the admirable situation of the estate, that it appeared extensive, and that the views from the house and different parts of the grounds must be fine.

The house was stately, with no air of newness about it, as if the inmates had but now taken possession. But to his accustomed eyes it did not have the dignity of an English mansion that had stood for generations, if not for centuries. Everywhere were evidences of comfort, of ease, of simplicity, of taste and refinement of life. But there were no signs of great wealth. This in the modern sense of wealth did not exist here. Dalkeith was not to marry the daughter of a millionaire. But as his grandfather had said the morning that the young man had first seen her, this was a sweet, good girl trained in a happy home, a lady in thought and feeling, and fit for every use to which his station would call her. He had been a witness of her brilliant talents. When he had alighted and announced himself, and was waiting for Dorothy to come to him, he almost felt as if the matter were settled.

It was the very day on which Longley was on his way to her. But Lord Dalkeith had at least an hour the start of him.

"The day is so beautiful," said the latter as he greeted Dorothy, "and the glimpse I caught of your garden and your trees so inviting in this air, shall we not go out of doors? And then later, will you present me to your mother? The word I had with her on Class Day makes me long for more."

"Yes, Lord Dalkeith, we will go outside, if you wish," she said. He noticed that she was pale. Was she frightened?

As he walked beside her he could not help remembering how in this thing he was about to do he was

running counter to the hopes and prejudices of his grandfather expressed in no uncertain terms. It was true the duke admired Dorothy. But he did not want her as a granddaughter. For this his heart was set upon Lady Griselda, one with themselves in interests and training, Griselda whom Buccleugh feared his grandson had alienated by his indifference. The last letter from home had been insistent and full of disturbance. Still, if Dalkeith were determined, Miss Brooke was a bright and beautiful young woman. As the young man walked beside her in the garden that summer morning, he saw that his grandfather had never spoken more truly of Dorothy.

"Shall we sit down here?" he asked as they moved slowly across the grounds and came to a rustic bench under a great elm.

"Yes, if you would like," said Dorothy. How could she have kept him from coming, she asked herself? She had not had even the right to assume in words that he was coming, save as any visitor might come. His eyes and tones had told her; but not his speech.

He looked at her as she answered him. That listless tone, that ready acquiescence did not sound like Miss Brooke's usual knowledge of her own will and readiness to follow it. Was she really frightened? Or what was the matter?

Not five minutes later Olive peering through the vines of the veranda, withdrew her face for an instant, and flying for Harry, dragged him on tiptoe to her point of observation.

"They're down there on the seat under the great elm," she whispered. "Don't you see them? I suppose he's proposing to her. Oh, how interesting! Harry Brooke, what do you mean?" And her hand was suddenly clapped over the boy's mouth. "Are you going to give one of your warwhoops here—and now? Haven't you common sense?"

"I only meant 'twas interesting," said Harry abashed, as he struggled himself free. "I was going to show my feelings. But perhaps she won't have him?" he hazarded. "I'll save my whoops."

"Not have him, Harry Brooke! Not have a live earl! Do you think Dorothy is a goose? Oh, dear!" she added, struck by the sudden consciousness that her sister was not absolutely to be reckoned on as to her choice. "If she doesn't, Harry, they'll make no end of fun of me at Hosmer Hall; because, you see—well, I've only hinted what I believed would come true."

"I guess you'd better keep mum the next time," vouchsafed Harry. "But look at them. They seem to be talking right along, as if nothing was happening."

"Come away," said Olive giving him a pull. "Mamma wouldn't like to have us spying. I only showed you for a moment."

"I s'pose we'll have to wait to hear the news," remarked the boy resignedly as he followed his sister.

It was true that the two under the elm were talking of what Dalkeith had seen in America and of incidents of the previous summer. For he was finding it more

difficult than he had imagined to say to Dorothy what he had come to say. But the more difficult it was, the more desirable she became to him. So that at last he broke out suddenly:

"Miss Brooke, you cannot misunderstand me. You must know how I love you; how I have come to America to ask you to marry me."

When Dorothy looked at him tears stood in her eyes, and she answered him sadly:

"How I wish you had not, Lord Dalkeith. For I cannot do it." And now there was no indecision in her tones.

"You cannot!" he cried surprised into still greater eagerness of entreaty. "You must have seen long ago how I have felt toward you, Miss Brooke—oh, wait," he hurried on, seeing in her face the repetition of her first answer. "Think of it, I beseech you."

"I have so much regard for you that I have tried to love you, Lord Dalkeith," she said. "But I cannot as I ought—for this."

He pleaded long with her, urging that his own great love would awaken a response in her; and, finally, even pleading those very advantages that for all the past year had been the objects of her ambition. And he reminded her of his grandfather's regard for her, although he was careful not to voice the duke's objection to her as Dalkeith's choice, not a personal objection by any means.

"I am grateful to him for his kind opinion, and for everything he has done for me ever since I first met him," she answered. "But I have come to see

that the things I love best and can do best are in my own land and not in yours, Lord Dalkeith. If I loved you very much, I suppose I should risk everything, like any other girl. But with only appreciation and regard and without such love, I should wrong you and myself."

He was silent for a full minute. Then he said, "It has taken you a long time to find that out, Miss Brooke." And he looked at her keenly.

A wave of contrition swept over Dorothy. She was humiliated by the unworthy motives that had so long held her, humiliated by her unworthy self-seeking.

"You do right to reprove me, Lord Dalkeith," she answered him. "It was a wrong to you to take so long to decide. And as what atonement I can make you, I will confess to you why I did it—I wanted all the fine things you can give me, I wanted to accept you."

"Then why not do it?" he cried joyfully. "You ought to have them; you have a right to them."

She waited a moment. Then she said deliberately, "Lord Dalkeith, what are you going to do with a girl who would rather write plays than go to court?"

His face flushed and darkened. The riddle was read.

He sprang to his feet, and stood looking down upon the girl who preferred a writer of advertisements to an earl.

"But why omit the collaborator?" he asked sharply.

Dorothy crimsoned. She sat motionless. Then she forced her reluctant eyes to meet his angry scorn.

"If I have found this so, how is it possible to give you any other answer?" she said firmly.

XLIV

A SENTENCE FINISHED

As the footsteps of Lord Dalkeith died away, Dorothy sat with face still flushed from the stroke of his last words.

They were true. She had refused place and prestige because she loved Ned Longley.

And she knew that she had done right. The man who had just left her would soon marry in his own rank; not improbably, Lady Griselda who had been selected for him before he had ever seen herself. But Dorothy had not treated him well; it seemed to her as if she were always doing wrong things. And yet she had been better to him than if she had accepted him, as things stood with her. Charley Bridges, too, had readily come to care for one better than she was, a happy choice for everybody.

But Ned was not like that. When he cared once, he cared always. He could not marry. Dorothy would not. They would always be dear friends, just as they were now. Plays by Ned Longley and Dorothy Brooke would come to be famous some day. To be Ned's co-worker, and her mother's comrade—to be true to the best in herself—what could she choose better? Brookehurst was a beautiful home.

She lifted her head with a movement of joy. Power was with her here and now. She perceived

that she was one who would never be happy idle and purposeless. To make the part of the world with which he had to do ever so little better because she lived; to share her joys, and conquer her sorrows—this was the life that God had given her. By His grace, she would live it. Everything was settled now in truth and freedom. She was happy.

A footstep on the turf behind her; a shadow thrown on the grass before her. She sprang up and turned herself toward the newcomer. It could not be Lord Dalkeith again?

The sudden cloud of that thought left her face. Sunshine shone on it, and in it.

"Why, Ned!" she cried. "How did you come? When did you come?"

"I came while you were talking with Lord Dalkeith. I have come to tell you something, to say something to you, Dorothy."

"I'm always ready to hear you, Ned. Is it news about the play? I hope that is marching on to victory?"

"I'd forgotten about the play. It is news, Dorothy. And——"

He had forgotten about the play! She looked at him in amazement. Was it his mother? But he did not look like that; it was rather a great excitement than a great sorrow.

"Then I hope it's good news," she said. "But would you rather go into the house? Or will you sit here?" For he was still standing before her.

"It will be better here," he answered. And he took

Dalkeith's seat. "I have come to tell you something," he went on, "before you tell me anything from yourself, Dorothy. I must be free to speak to you, whatever comes afterward. You will let me do this?"

"It's such a surprise to see you," she said. "I feel as if something were in the air. But I can't possibly guess what, since it's not the play. Or is it something about Mr. Harris?"

"It must surprise you to see me," he answered. "Your thoughts were elsewhere to-day."

He was so evidently embarrassed, that her embarrassment at his appearance at the very moment that her thoughts had been so full of him vanished. She was very curious, and somewhat amused.

"You've not hit it this time, Ned," she laughed. "I was thinking of you just as you came." She could safely say that; he could never guess what she had been thinking.

He wondered if in her new joy she had been pitying him? But he must not know yet. He must speak while he could in honor do so.

"Dorothy," he began with a new resolution in his tones, "do you remember the evening before that night at the theatre, when—when it seemed as if the bottom dropped out of life? Do you remember words I said to you?" She did not answer, and he went on: "Do you remember I began to whisper to you even in the crowd—you were so dear, I could not help it? Do you remember, Dorothy, how I told you I loved you?"

"Yes," she said, very low, and not daring to look at him.

"Do you remember what I began to ask you then? And that Norcross broke into my words, and the crowd came between us? Do you remember?"

"I do," she answered. If only he knew how often she had said them over to herself.

"And do you remember that when I left you that evening, I said to you—'to-morrow, Dorothy'?"

"Yes, Ned, I remember," she said again, so low that he could scarcely hear her.

"Dorothy, this is the 'to-morrow'. All the dreary time between has been like an Arctic night. But I have come to-day to finish my sentence begun a year and more ago, and you know why not finished then. You know how I love you, Dorothy. My darling, will you be my wife?"

Dorothy's face was crimson. Even at the moment of her joyful confusion, the sense of the amusing seized upon her. For the collaborator scored by Lord Dalkeith had been very prompt in appearing.

Ned sat waiting. His breath seemed to choke him. Was she the betrothed of another? The time had come that he must know. He braced himself. Then as the silence continued, he began to wonder.

She sat pulling to pieces a leaf that she had plucked from a rosebush at hand. For another moment she still said nothing; but her lips quivered, as if she repressed a smile. At last it broke forth.

"You don't know how you're spoiling all my fine plans, Ned. For when you came I was just making

up my mind that I would be an old maid and write plays with you."

He sat stunned at first with amazement; and then with joy as the possible truth dawned upon him.

"You mean you have refused Dalkeith, Dorothy?" he cried. And his arm was about her.

"You mustn't ask me that," she said. "It's not nice to tell tales out of school. You'll just have to guess what happened." But as her head was on his shoulder and her eyes looked into his, he did not find guessing difficult.

"Oh, Dorothy, the wonder of it! The wonder of it!" he said. "To think you love me like that!"

"Yes, it is very odd," she answered teasingly.

After they had sat and talked a long time, she asked him,

"Now, Ned, don't you think I should have made a good old maid?"

"Too good to last!" he laughed.

He told her what had happened to make him free to come to her.

"Chesterdown has turned out just as you believed and always insisted," he said. "It must have been on the eve of my father's death, indeed, the date shows that, that Chesterdown sold him a large number of mining shares, not of the mine that has gone up, but the other which Chesterdown appeared to have so much money in. It was my father's money, Dorothy. I've found the account of the whole transaction; and the fellow has confessed and promised to make restitution at once. He has only the choice to do

it quietly, or be prosecuted." And he gave her the story of how the paper had been discovered, and how his mother would be amply provided for.

"And now, Ned, don't be in a hurry to sell that play outright," admonished Dorothy.

"No; we'll not be in a hurry, you first-class business woman," he laughed.

"I don't understand," Ned went on, "how Chesterdown contrived to bamboozle me about the check my father had given him in payment. But he mixed it up with other stocks and other matters and money given him for debts, the receipts for which, he said, my father must have had about him at the accident. They were lost, he declared. Evidently, he believed this paper was also. I could prove nothing until now. But with the world before us where to choose, we'll not waste time over him. I wonder if you're going to invite me to spend the day here?"

"If it's agreeable to you," she smiled. "And shall we go and have a word with mother? I—" she hesitated and blushed hotly—"I think she is expecting somebody," she finished bravely. "And, my brave Ned, I don't think she will be disappointed that it's you."

"I'm very fond of Ned Longley, you know," announced Olive to her confidant, Harry. "But then, he's, as you might say, an everyday affair. But a real, live earl, Harry! Ah, me!" she sighed.

XLV

HER WEDDING DAY

Such a morning in October! The sky as brilliant as June; a hint of summer warmth in the sunshine, and a touch of the vigor of autumn in the air; the sunlight burning gloriously upon the red maple leaves as they still clung to their thinned boughs, and tracing in graceful outlines the bared branches of the elms against the gorgeous sky; and the rustling red and russet leaves of the hardy oaks holding their own in the autumn frosts; and the pine needles of the firs ready to brave the winter on their evergreen trees.

As Dorothy Brooke opened her eyes against the glowing sky, she felt the warmth of the sunshine, the vigor of the air, on this, her birthday, and her wedding day.

As she awoke, her mother came into the room, and the girl springing up to greet her, knelt at her feet with her head on her mother's knee, as she used to do in her schoolgirl days. She was taller than her mother, and she was twenty that morning. But in heart she was still her mother's little comrade; and in heart she always would be. The cloud that had troubled Mrs. Brooke had gone from the girl's face. It was bright with joy, and more beautiful than ever with depth of feeling.

"Mother dear," she said, "I think I love every-

body better in loving Ned. He doesn't take me from you; he is one of us." The morning talk of mother and daughter had never been a greater joy to both.

As Dorothy coming down to breakfast, greeted her father that morning, he held her off and looked into her smiling eyes.

"As to me, Dorothy," he said, "I want you to know that I'm happy to have you on your own side of the water; and I think Longley is *almost* good enough for you—don't you?" As she put her arms about her father's neck, and his lips met hers, the pang of parting, even this happy parting, smote him. But it was over; and they had a merry breakfast. Even Olive had come to be resigned, although sometimes she sighed in secret as she quoted to herself:

> "Of all sad words of tongue, or pen,
> The saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

By this she referred to the coronet and the splendors that might have been.

There was one guest in the house that morning, although she did not come to breakfast, who made them all very happy—Mrs. Longley. When she learned of Ned's engagement to Dorothy, a surprising thing happened, which proved how much she had been grieved over her son's pain, and how much such grief had retarded her recovery. For with the news of his joy, she gained immediately and decidedly. Dorothy's visit to her, and Dorothy's confidences had done her good. She saw that her son was valued as he ought to be. She speedily passed the point which

it had not been certain that she would ever reach; and beyond this her progress had been more rapid than any one had dared to hope. She was very far from well; she would never be strong; but she would gain more than she had yet reached. She had been able to visit Grace; and now she was here at Ned's wedding. She must sit during the ceremony, it was true; but before that time she would walk into the room on her son's arm and be placed in her easychair in the corner of vantage.

It was well that Brookehurst was an ample mansion; for it needed all its size to welcome its guests. Rex and Lulu, Grace and her husband, Colonel and Mrs. Pell, Priscy and Lord Hervey, and Mr. and Mrs. Harris were among those sure to be present. At Ned's earnest entreaty and by Grace's skilful persuasion, Mr. Bridges, Sr. consented to accompany his wife, although with many fears that his awkwardness would put her out in some way. But he received so much more attention than she did, that she was quite meek, for Mrs. Bridges, and afterwards informed him privately that she and Grace had polished him up quite a little.

Professor and Mrs. Claflin, and Miss Aylesford, and Dorothy's intimate college friends, Susie Codman and Clara Morton were there. So was Kitty Hyde. Mabel White to her surprise and joy received not only a formal invitation, but a letter from Dorothy which she could not resist. Jimmy Reid, Ned's true friend, found himself still too much Grace's lover to endure

the sight of her happiness. But the day came when he could do this. Mrs. Bromley arrived with Lulu and Rex whom she was visiting. In truth, there were too many guests not to make somewhat of a crowd; but nobody had wanted to be left out. And Bella and Nora and Maud, although after the ceremony they vanished to their various duties, were among the invited guests and not merely lookers-on through a doorway when Dorothy was married.

" They've been a part of our family for years, Bella ever since I was a baby," said the girl. " Of course they are going to see me make Ned happy."

When after the reception Dorothy went to exchange her beautiful white gown for her traveling suit, she looked about her room with the new sense that it would no longer be hers in the same way that it had always been before. When she returned to it, as she hoped to do often, it would be to visit, not to live. A feeling new and strange came over her, a realization of the great change in her life. She would have nothing different from what it was now; but the old days had been very beautiful and dear. She wanted to take away with her a memento of these school and college and home days. One of her trunks stood open for the last things to be put into it before locking. She must tuck something into this.

She scanned the different things in the room. Many were too large and many were unfit.

" Ah, this is it," she said to herself at last, as there looked down upon her from the wall the little worn sketch from the " Vision of Sir Launfal " in which the

Savior, in His hand the chalice containing the Holy Grail stands before the old man who is gazing up at Him in ecstacy. She took down the little sketch framed in its thread of ebony, and stood looking at the motto under it that she had cherished from the days of Hosmer Hall, the motto which among other happy gifts and blessings had brought her Pell-Mell. She held it out and with eyes dim with joyful tears she read softly to herself the words which she still meant to make the motto of her life:

> "Not what we give, but what we share,
> For the gift without the giver is bare."

Yes, with all her mistakes and faults, this was the life she wished to live, she and Ned, in the land which calls for the best thought and work of those who love it, the land of beautiful opportunity to those who can see and follow it.

Some one was coming.

Dorothy hid the sketch and motto hastily in her trunk, and with happy face and heart turned to the life upon which she had entered, the new life rich in the blessings of the old and holding sweetnesses all its own.

As when they had started upon their wedding trip she and Ned sat together in the train, alone in the crowd about them, he whispered to her, his eyes full of trustfulness:

"You are glad, Dorothy? You don't regret?"

As she looked back at him, she understood better than ever that without him nothing would have

counted to her, and that with him she did not need everything else. She had not the slightest intention of saying this to him, however. But mirth shone in the gladness of her eyes as she answered him:

"Yes, I'm glad, Ned. I don't regret a single strawberry leaf."

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